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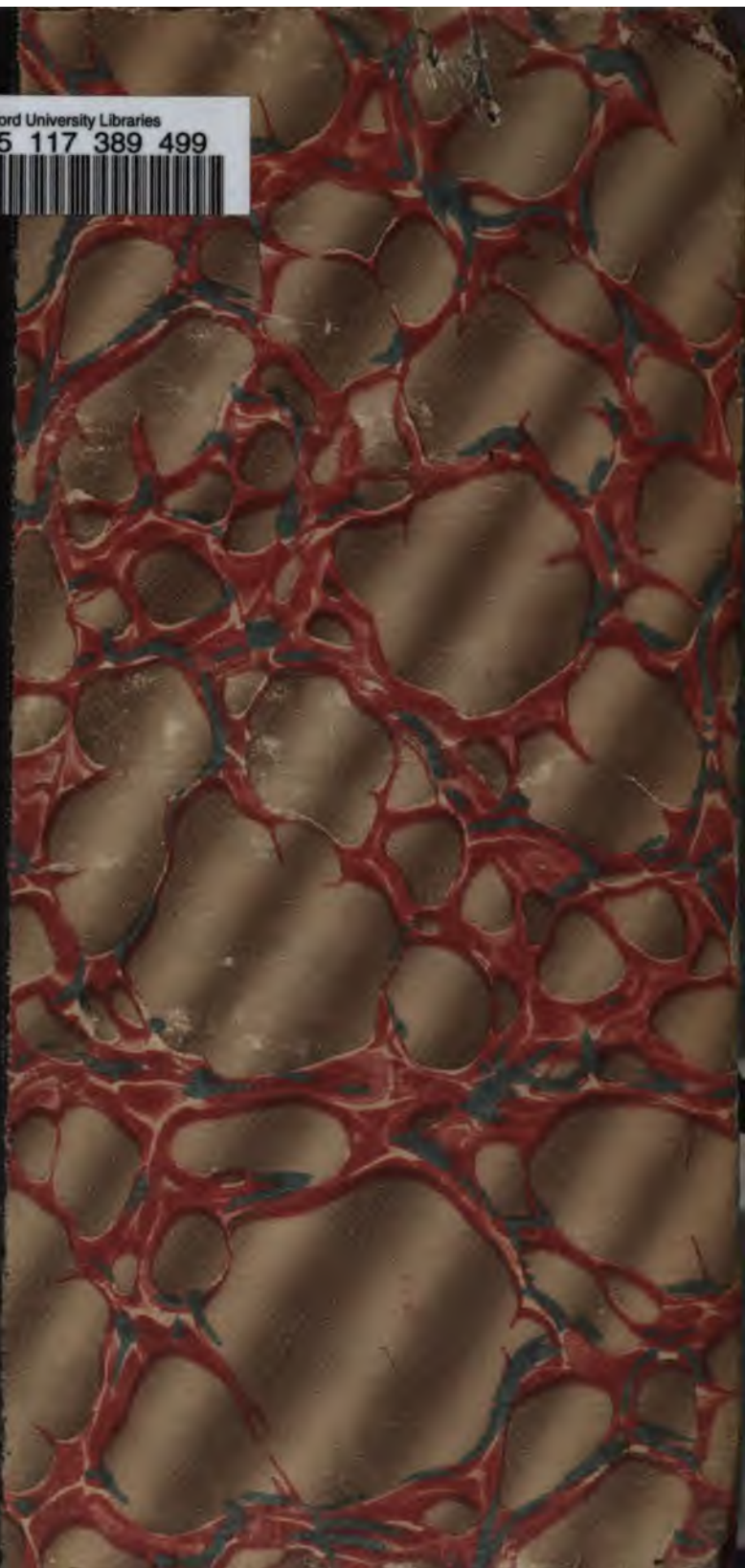
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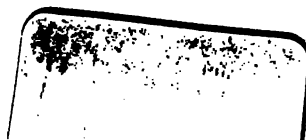
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THE LIFE
OF
EDMUND BURKE.

THE SECOND EDITION,
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

[Entered at Stationers-hall.]



THE LIFE
OF
EDMUND BURKE.

COMPREHENDING AN
IMPARTIAL ACCOUNT
OF HIS
LITERARY AND POLITICAL EFFORTS,
AND A
Sketch of the Conduct and Character
OF HIS MOST EMINENT
ASSOCIATES, COADJUTORS, AND OPPONENTS.

THE SECOND EDITION,
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

By ROBERT BISSET, LL.D.

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THE LIFE

OF

EDMUND BURKE.

BEFORE Parliament met the ensuing winter, very important events had taken place in America. General Howe, with the main army, had gained several victories, which many have asserted might have put an end to the war. General Burgoyne, with the northern army, endeavouring to effect a junction with the Commander in Chief, got into a defile, and was compelled to surrender.

In the sessions 1777 Burke returned to his vigorous attention to parliamentary business. During no preceding meeting had there been so great a quantity of important affairs, and in none had the powers of Burke

been more frequently called forward. Not America only, but France and Ireland, occupied the attention of Parliament. The discussion of the concerns of the sister kingdom brought him into a very delicate predicament, in which, in the discharge of his duty, he was under the necessity of acting, contrary to the opinion of his constituents, who had, unsolicited, applied to him to be their representative, as the strenuous champion of mercantile interest.

An amendment recommending peace was proposed to the address. Burke dwelt less on the original injustice and inexpediency of the war than formerly. He confined himself chiefly to its management and effects. He entered into a very minute and extensive consideration of the force employed, and the expence incurred ; proving from documents that the year 1777 cost as many men, and more money, against the Americans, than any year of our wars against the combined power of the house of Bourbon. November 28, Mr. Fox having moved, that certain

papers should be laid before the house, Lord North at first agreed, but afterwards made exceptions. Burke said, ' I never heard the noble Lord behave with so much candour, generosity, and spirit, as he had shewn in agreeing to the request. He had published a bond, wherein he granted all ; but in the end was inserted a *little defeasance*, with a power of revocation, by which he preserved himself from the execution of every grant he had made. His conduct reminded me of a certain Governor, who, when he arrived at the place of his appointment, sat down to a table covered with profusion, and abounding in every dainty and delicacy, that art, nature, and a provident steward could furnish : but a pigmy physician watched over the health of the Governor, excepted to one dish, because it was hard of digestion ; to another, because it was unhealthy ; in this progressive mode robbed the Governor of every dish on his table, and left him without a dinner.'

When the news arrived of the melancholy catastrophe of Burgoyne's expedition, Burke joined the warmest of the party in imputing the failure to Administration, although hitherto there were no documents to prove Ministers to be blameable, either in the plan, or in the means afforded for its execution. What Burke said on the subject was therefore, however ingenious, mere invective, on an assumption, not reasoning on information. Men, in that case, were evidently his objects ; not measures, as he did not know what the measures were. It must be acknowledged by the greatest admirers of Burke, that his proceedings on this occasion, in conjunction with those of other members of Opposition, tended rather to thwart and embarrass Government than to support their country under its late disaster. Whether the war was right or wrong originally, ceased now to be the question. As we were involved in it, we must either *get out of it honourably*, or *carry it on VIGOROUSLY*. The surest way to *procure a good peace* was not to succumb under misfortune, but to

redouble exertion. During the Christmas recess subscriptions had been offered by bodies of men, for raising regiments to make up for the loss sustained at Saratoga. Burke represented these efforts as illegal and unconstitutional: illegal, because it was levying men and money without consent of Parliament; unconstitutional, because such levies might be indefinite as to number, and might be employed to deprive the country of its liberties. He did not, however, prove from either statute or decision, that raising men without consent of Parliament was illegal; although to have raised money without its consent, either to pay troops or for any other purpose, would have been contrary to the law and constitution. But the money here for bounties, &c. was not raised by Government, it was offered by individuals; there was no law against either individuals or bodies making a present of their own money to the King, or to whomsoever they pleased: SUCH CONTRIBUTIONS HAD BEEN USUAL IN TIMES OF EMERGENCY, and had

been approved of by the most zealous supporters of the constitution.

The employment of the Indians, which had frequently, in the course of this session, excited the severe animadversions and pathetic lamentations of Burke, was on February 6, 1778, made by him the subject of a regular motion. In his introductory speech he took a wide view of the state and manners of the Indian savages: he argued, that in cruelty they exceeded any barbarians recorded either in ancient or modern history; and after a particular detail rose to a general survey of savage life, sentiments, and actions. The infliction of individual pain, he said, more than the political annoyance of enemies, was their object; that therefore their mode of hostility was not conducive to the purposes of civilized nations engaged in war, which are not torment, but reduction and pacification. The Indian tribes had formerly, he observed, been, relatively to either the British or French settled in their neighbourhood, powerful states: that then it was

necessary to be on terms of amity with them ; but that now their numbers were reduced, and the necessity to their neighbours of seeking their alliance no longer existed ; and nothing but necessity could excuse the employment of so savage warriors. To the purposes of conquest or coercion they were generally inefficacious, whatever personal torment they might inflict. If extermination were the object, the Indians would do all they could to exterminate, by massacring man, woman, and child ; but their barbarities would only be carried to districts on their own frontiers, and as to the whole colonies would be impotent. The consequence of employing them was partial butchery, without answering any general end : though they might accompany our forces whilst successful, in hopes of plunder and butchery, they would immediately desert them on the appearance of danger, as they had done Burgoyne. He reprobated the employment of the Indians also as a measure of economy. He maintained, that even were their mode of warfare unex-

ceptionable in other respects, the service did not nearly repay the expence ; all that they did to annoy the enemy might have been done by regulars. The barbarities of the Indians must widen the breach between Britain and the colonies. He reprobated, at the same time, an attempt that had been made by Government to excite an insurrection in the southern colonies, of negro slaves against their masters, as equally barbarous and impolitic. The Virginians were so enraged at this attempt that they declared, if all the other colonies should submit, they would not, to the instigators of treachery and barbarity. He concluded, that the only remedy for the alienation of affections, and the distrust and terror of our own Government, which had been brought on by their inhuman measures, was for Parliament to inquire seriously and strictly into them ; and, by the most marked and public disapprobation, to convince the world that they had no share in practices which were not more disgraceful to a great and civilized nation, than they were contrary to all true

policy, and repugnant to all the feelings of humanity: for, that it was not in human nature for any people to place a confidence in those, to whom they attributed such unparalleled sufferings and miseries; and the colonies would never be brought to believe, that those who were capable of carrying on a war in so cruel and dishonourable a manner, could be depended on for a sound, equitable, and cordial peace; much less, that they could be safely entrusted with power and dominion.

Ministers endeavoured to prove, that unless Britain had employed the Indians, America would have engaged them; but brought no proof to maintain this assertion.

A set of motions was now proposed, in which Mr. Fox took the lead, for an inquiry into the state of the forces in America, from the commencement of the war, and the losses sustained. His object was, to shew that the men and money employed in the contest had been thrown away, and that the

coercion of America was unattainable. This proposal was opposed by Administration, on the ground that it would be imprudent to expose the number of our forces. Mr. Fox asserted, that twenty thousand men had perished in the contest. The Minister answered, that not more than *twelve hundred had been slain*. Mr. Fox, always ready in directly applying the just criterion, when truth was his object, moved for an account of all the men sent to America, all that still remained, and that the difference would be the loss sustained. Particular inquiry was deemed by the friends of Administration inexpedient. Similar motions were made in the upper house, and rejected. The great Earl of Chatham, notwithstanding his bodily infirmities, took an active share in the business of this session, the last which that illustrious statesman lived to see.

February 17, Lord North proposed a conciliatory plan, which afforded much discussion to Burke and other leading members of Opposition. He defended his own plans

and conduct respecting America. He asserted, that it had always been his opinion, that the taxation of America could never produce a beneficial revenue to Britain. He had wished to keep the discussion of American taxation as much as possible out of Parliament. To lessen the complaints of the Americans, he had proposed, in 1770, the taking off all the duties but that on tea; and that, in proposing the East India Company should export their teas duty free, he had meant the relief of that Company in such a way as would accommodate the Americans, by affording them tea at a cheaper rate, instead of being a ground of complaint; that the coercion acts were the effects of necessity, not of his inclination; and that the war which afterwards ensued had arisen from the Americans and their abettors. The events of the war, he said, had turned out quite different from what the country had reason to expect; and that to the event, and not his well-grounded expectations, he must make his plan conform. He proposed two bills, one for declaring the

intentions of Great Britain concerning the exercise of the right of taxing the colonies, and, in fact, renouncing the exercise of the right; another for appointing commissioners, with full powers to treat with America. The great defect of Lord North was want of firmness. With an excellent understanding and upright intentions, he too readily sacrificed his own opinion to that of others; there was in his conduct a defect very pernicious either to the public or private manager of important business, *he was too easily borne down by opposition to what he himself thought right.* This was very evident in his parliamentary conduct, and it is not unfair to conclude, that it took place sometimes in the cabinet. The more determined abettors of coercive measures were confounded at the proposed abandonment of the plans they had hitherto supported. Mr. Fox professed to approve of the general object of conciliation, and shewed that the means proposed were nearly the same as those intended by Burke in his conciliatory bill some years before. At the same time

he entered into a full discussion of the ignorance and weakness which was compelled, after much loss, to propose plans, that if adopted, when offered some years before, would have prevented that loss. Burke maintained that the terms of conciliation, however admissible they might have been at the commencement of the contest, would be now too late, as any terms would be short of independence, which, he affirmed, the Americans had now permanently established for themselves, and had, besides, entered into a treaty with France for securing. To this sound reasoning, founded on accurate information, he added argument less conclusive. He contended that no terms coming from that Administration would be received by the Americans. It is probable that the Americans, or ANY MEN OF SENSE, would consider WHAT the terms were proposed by the contending nation, not WHO were the agents. The bills, in their passage through the house, were rather the subject of regulation and modification, than of opposition. Several provisions proposed by Burke were

adopted, and the whole passed without a division.

The state of the navy, now become a more important subject of discussion than during any former period of the war, as France had manifested hostile intentions, called forth the powers of Fox and Burke. In considering the navy, it appears that Burke either had been deficient in his usual information, or had argued more as a party man than as an impartial statesman. The navy, as it appeared from the number of well appointed ships employed in various quarters, or ready to be sent to sea, was in a very respectable state. Burke asserted that no officer of character would be induced to take the command of a fleet in such a condition, an assertion in which he was totally wrong, as several officers of high reputation declared their willingness to serve, and one of the first professional respectability, highly esteemed by Burke himself, actually undertook the command of the principal fleet. To blame Administration,

when really wrong, was the duty of a patriotic senator: to censure them in every case, whether wrong or right, was the part merely of an Opposition member. Burke, indeed, as we have seen in the 'Thoughts on the Cause of the Discontents,' avowed himself a party man, and persisted, during a great portion of his life, in that declaration. His avowal that he was so is nothing to the merit or demerit of the question; parties are right or wrong according to their object, and the means they employ. To attack not measures only, but men, whatever the measures be, though commonly practised by parties, is inconsistent with justice and truth. It is on questions of great and general policy, involving measures and not men, that we are to look for the exertions of Burke in their highest intellectual, moral, and political excellence. Fox made a motion for an inquiry into the unfortunate expedition from Canada, the purport of which was to prove that the Minister was to blame for the disaster; that the plan was wrong; that Burgoyne had acted agree-

ably to the tenor of his instructions ; that the force afforded him was inadequate. Burke warmly supported these arguments, although he had neither oral nor written evidence, and proceeded on conjecture, a conjecture in which he was afterwards proved to be wrong, it being evinced by documents that the plan was concerted in conjunction with Burgoyne himself, and that all the force was supplied to him which he deemed necessary. Here, therefore, Burke was an advocate against the Minister instead of a judge :—a partizan instead of a senator.

The Opposition party, however unanimous in inveighing against Ministers, by no means agreed respecting the terms on which they would proffer peace to the Americans. They were ranged in two classes :—those of whom the Marquis of Rockingham was the nominal head, Fox and Burke the real ; and those of whom Chatham was the leader, assisted by Temple, Shelburne, and Camden, in the House of Lords ; by Colonel Barré,

Dunning, and some others, in the House of Commons. In the upper house the Chatham party prevailed ; in the lower the Rockingham. Lord Chatham was utterly inimical to the independence of America: Burke and Fox considered it as unavoidable. In the upper house the principal supporter of that part of Opposition was the Duke of Richmond. Chatham, and the members who joined with him, thought the independence of America the greatest of all possible national evils: Burke and Fox admitted the independence of America to be a great evil, but not to be avoided, without incurring a greater, in the continuance of hostilities, with the addition of a French war; and that even after all our enormous expence of blood and treasure, its acknowledgement must be ultimately made. There were some other points in which the different members of Opposition disagreed. Burke and the Rockingham party were inimical to reform in Parliament: Chatham, Shelburne, Dunning, and Camden, were for a reform. Fox and the Duke of Richmond, though

they concurred with Burke on the subject of American independence, coincided with Chatham as to reform in Parliament. But though these great men agreed that some change was necessary, they by no means proposed the same specific object and plans. The Duke of Richmond's scheme of universal suffrage and annual parliaments would have been the greatest deviation from the constitution of Britain: a scheme arising from theoretical views of possible perfection in mankind, and not from the contemplation of their actual history and conduct.

Towards the close of this session, application was made to Parliament in favour of Ireland, to relieve that country from sundry unjust and injudicious restraints respecting their manufactures and trade. These restraints had injured Ireland, it was alledged, without serving Britain. The Irish had been hindered from manufacturing their own wool, in order to favour the woollen manufactory of England. The consequence of this was, that Irish wool was smuggled

over into France, to the great detriment of British manufactures, as with such materials France was able to rival this island. The bills were intended to relieve Ireland, and promote her trade and manufactures, without injuring those of this country. Burke was the great and powerful supporter of the bills. On this subject he displayed an amazing extent of commercial knowledge ; he went over the manufactures and trade of the two kingdoms, with the contributions of each to support Government ; not their actual state only, but their history and principles. His speech alone was sufficient to convey to any man of understanding, unacquainted with the relative commerce of England and Ireland, and the absolute and relative commerce of Ireland, a complete knowledge of the subject. Indeed, whatever speech Burke made on a new question exhibited a full view of the matter in discussion, in all its various relations. One circumstance placed him in a very delicate and embarrassing situation. His constituents of Bristol apprehended that their interest would

be affected by the bills in favour of Ireland, supported by their representative. They intimated their opinion to him, probably expecting that the intimation might induce him to withdraw his support of the bills. Burke was convinced that the bills were generally equitable as to Britain and Ireland; not impolitical to Britain, and not injurious even to Bristol. It came to be the question whether he would follow the voice of his constituents, or the voice of his conscience. The lesser obligation he made give way to the greater; and though he anticipated rejection at a future poll for Bristol, continued to support the laws which he judged to be right.

After much discussion, in which the supporters had the advantage, it was agreed by both parties to defer the main business until the next session of Parliament. The opposers gave way to some enlargements with regard to Irish trade, from which its supporters hoped that, by allowing them another session before its final determination,

they might become well disposed to promote some more of the propositions.

May 1st, a bill was proposed for excluding contractors from sitting in Parliament. The reasons for such an exclusion appeared to be so very obvious, that even the ingenuity of Burke brought little novelty of argument. So near were he and his friends to carrying this question, that they lost it by a majority of two voices only, 113 to 115.

A bill, moved by Sir George Saville for repealing certain penalties and disabilities to which Roman Catholics were subject, was vigorously promoted by Burke. He went on the ground that no penalties for difference of religion should be in force after the cause of their enactment had ceased : that restraints, which were judicious and even necessary at the time of their imposition, in order to secure the Protestant religion, were now totally useless : what was then defence, was now persecution ; a principle entirely inconsistent with rational religion. The bill

passed with unanimous approbation. Burke's support of this liberal bill also added to the displeasure his constituents at Bristol had conceived against him on account of his speeches in favour of Ireland.

General Burgoyne had now returned from America on his parole. He soon found that he was no longer an object of court favour, or of ministerial countenance. When the principal personages withdrew their regard, others followed their example. He applied for a court-martial, which was refused him, on the ground that, whilst a prisoner, his preceding conduct was not cognizable by any court in this country. There, it appears, Government was right, because a court-martial's sentence, if unfavourable, might be ineffectual; as the infliction of either confinement or death on a prisoner belonging to the enemy, would be injustice to the enemy, by whose courtesy only the prisoner was in this country.

Fox and Burke very warmly embraced the cause of the General, with an eagerness,

indeed, that outwent cognizance of its merits. Burgoyne solicited parliamentary inquiry. This the American Minister declared could not be granted until after a military investigation, then impracticable, and adduced apposite precedents to justify the refusal. The discussion, after much altercation, and very bitter invectives against the Minister by Fox and Burke, was postponed. The last acts of that session were testimonies to the merits and services of the illustrious Chatham, recently deceased.

This year Sir William Howe asked permission to resign his command, alledging that he had not enjoyed the confidence and support of Ministry in such a way as to answer the purposes of his commission. The desired leave was granted; and Sir Henry Clinton was appointed in his place. The justice of his allegations respecting confidence and support was a subject afterwards of a parliamentary inquiry, which ended in such a manner as to leave the case doubtful.

France, as Burke had often predicted, took an open part in the contest with America. If we consider this junction with its consequences, it was a very important epoch even to the history of Burke; as it generated, or rather fostered those principles which have since produced effects, that called forth the full exertion of his extraordinary powers.

The account given of the commencement of the naval war in the Annual Register of 1779, carries with it internal evidence of having been written by Burke: it is a very able account, and it leans to the side of Admiral Keppel. Besides its general ability, it bears some peculiar marks of his pen: many parts of the account are rather ratiocinative than narrative, the production of one that wished to throw blame on the Ministry and to praise the Admiral, rather than of one who merely stated facts, indifferent to whom either approbation or censure should attach. It endeavours to prove, that

the First Lord of the Admiralty had been negligent, and had not provided a sufficient force to cope with that of the French. The reasoning on that subject is nearly the same as Burke often used in the house; the answer to it was the actual state of the navy, the number of ships well manned and equipped, which had been sent to various parts of the globe.

The commissioners sent to America were not successful; their secretary, the celebrated Dr. Fergusson, was refused a passport to the Congress. The Congress, as before, would receive no overtures, unless their independence was previously acknowledged: this Burke had foreseen; and it required much less ability than he possessed, to foresee that terms not essentially different from those offered by the Howes, when the British armament was in unimpaired force, and America without an ally, would not be received by her, elated with the capture of Burgoyne's army, and strengthened by an alliance with France.

This campaign was on the whole disastrous. The elements seemed to have combined with the enemy in annoying the British fleet on the American seas. On the European, the issue of a battle was not altogether such as the Ministry and indeed the nation expected, and afterwards thought it might have been. The consideration of that action, and its consequences, occupied much of the attention of Burke during the following session. The speech from the throne, though it did not express, implied a censure on the operations of the campaign ; it asserted, that our arms had not been attended with the success which the vigour of our exertions promised. Burke imputed the failure to the inferiority of our fleets and the tardiness of our preparations. The conciliatory propositions, he contended, met with the issue which he expected, and all men might expect. The valedictory manifesto of the commissioners was strongly censured by Burke. This manifesto, the political reader will remember, declared, that if the Americans did not accede to

terms of conciliation, and adhered to the alliance of France, the British would change the nature of the war, and do every thing possible to render America an useless accession. Burke inveighed against this declaration as contrary to the principles of humanity and civilized society; that if a system of desolation was begun by us, it would be retorted by the Americans, and so a horrible addition be made to the usual calamities of war. Besides, he said, that threats of devastation and destruction from those, who manifestly were not now superior in force, were idle and vain. It shewed a wish for barbarity, without the means of being effectually barbarous. It was requested that the manifesto should be disavowed by Administration; and a motion was made for an address to his Majesty, expressing the disapprobation of the House of Commons. This motion was negatived.

The action of the 27th of July now became the subject of parliamentary discussion. Sir Hugh Palliser had published a letter in

a morning paper, containing a statement of the particulars of the engagement, and replete with indirect insinuation and direct censure against the conduct of Admiral Keppel. Keppel declared, that unless this letter was disavowed, he would accept of no command under which Palliser was to be employed. Palliser, in the house, charged Keppel, in whose praises he before had been lavish, with misconduct and incapacity, and applied to the Admiralty for a court-martial on the Commander in Chief. This was readily granted, and Keppel was honourably acquitted.*

Great dissensions in the navy were the consequence of the dispute between the two Admirals. One party blamed Palliser for his proceedings against the Commander in Chief, another censured Keppel for losing an advantageous opportunity, by an un-

* This trial, of great consequence in itself, derived an adventitious importance, from its having afforded the first opportunity of a display of his powers to the greatest judicial speaker of modern times.

necessary apprehension of the dangers of a *lee-shore*!

One of the judges, Captain Duncan, when afterwards elevated to a situation in which his wisdom, skill, and vigour could fully operate, has demonstrated, to the complete satisfaction of both friends and enemies, that an Admiral may gain a signal victory, though very near a LEE-SHORE. Lord Nelson's *authority* supports the same theory.

Fox and Burke endeavoured to prove, that the fleet had been so inferior to what was requisite, as to manifest great neglect of duty in the First Lord of the Admiralty. A motion was made, to censure Lord Sandwich and his colleagues in office. Here Burke, as on many questions respecting the conduct of Ministry, was a mere party man, not a philosophical politician. No facts were adduced to justify the censure. Had Burke been, on every question, the impartial philosopher, he certainly would have been a still greater character. Impar-

tiality, however, was not to be expected from the ablest of men, with so very violent passions, in a situation tending so much to inflame passion. Unconnected with party politics, in the calm investigation of the closet, his extraordinary genius must have been a more constant agent of wisdom than when so often biassed by party contentions.

A question now occurred, not of ministerial conduct, but of national policy, on a subject that had been partly discussed the preceding session, respecting the trade of Ireland. Here it was Burke's province to take the lead ; he took a very active part in endeavouring to procure to his native country that relief which she wanted, and which it was just and politic she should receive. The Minister for some time did not interfere in the business, but finding a great clamour excited against the propositions by the British traders and manufacturers whose particular interests they would affect, he at last opposed them, and they were negatived by a small majority.

About this period Burke was defendant in a Chancery suit, in which Lord Verney was plaintiff. It was alledged by Lord Verney, that Burke, his brother, and cousin, had been engaged with him in a stock-jobbing speculation, by which very great loss had been incurred ; that Lord Verney was the ostensible man, and had been obliged to make out the engagements ; that Edmund Burke being the only one of the rest, who had any property, Verney had applied to him to defray his share of the debt. On refusal, he filed a bill against him in Chancery, claiming Burke as his partner. Burke making affidavit that he was not, the matter was, of course, concluded in Burke's favour. A great clamour arose against Burke for clearing himself in this manner : but a positive oath of a man of character is certainly better evidence than vague rumour.

The Roman Catholic bill, which had passed during the preceding session, had excited great alarms in Scotland, as it was supposed to be the intention of Parliament to extend

the relief to Scotch Catholics. Not the common people alone, but many of the gentry and clergy, and of the latter not the ignorant enthusiastic only, but some of the liberal and learned, considered the proposed relief as an introduction to popery. The press teemed with publications describing the errors of popery, and imputing to that mode of faith, even at that time, all the hurtful principles which sprang from it in the days of ignorance. Associations were formed to oppose popery, by mechanics and manufacturers, in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and other towns; the weavers of Renfrew and Paisley displaying a peculiar zeal against the doctrines of Antichrist. The puritanical papaphobia was again becoming epidemical. The populace was inflamed, and rose to tumult and riot in various places. At Edinburgh, a party of those enlightened theologians, the Leith sailors, took the lead in stirring up vengeance against the enemies of that religion, for the knowledge and practice of which they were themselves so eminently distinguished. Assisted by many

other divines, they set fire to chapels, and houses of the Papists. The Roman Catholic sufferers applied to Burke to present a petition to Parliament, praying for a compensation on account of the losses they had sustained. Some of the Scotch had been absurd enough to approve of the fanatical outrages, on the ground that it was proper for the people spiritedly to manifest their hatred of Popery. That Burke ridiculed with great humour, considering so despicable reasoning as unworthy of a serious refutation. He also attacked very strongly the supineness of Government, to which he imputed the mad violence of the populace.

It happened, at that time, that the Prime Minister was indulging himself in a profound nap. 'I hope,' said Burke, 'Government is not dead but asleep:' pointing to Lord North, 'Brother Lazarus is not dead, only *sleepeth*.' The laugh upon this occasion was not more loud on one side of the house, than it appeared to be relished on the other. Even the noble Lord, alluded to on the oc-

casion, seemed to enjoy the allusion as heartily as the rest of the house, as soon as he was sufficiently awake to conceive the cause of the universal joke.

Fox took the lead, ably supported by Burke, in a motion made for the removal of Lord Sandwich. Great dissensions had taken place in the navy, in consequence of the resignation of Lord Howe and Admiral Keppel, both of which were imputed to the want of capacity, negligence, or improper partiality of the first Lord of the Admiralty. He, it was said, had neglected to reinforce the fleet of Lord Howe, when the fate of our navy and army in America depended on the command of the seas. He had furnished Keppel with an inadequate force for the object of his cruise. After the Admiral had distinguished himself by his conduct in the engagement with the French, he had patronized and supported the Vice-Admiral in his attack; an attack that was declared by a court-martial false, slanderous, and malicious. Fox *assuming* these grounds of

partiality, negligence, and misconduct, drew a conclusion very fair, *if he had established his premises*, that he ought to be removed from his office. Burke pointed, with all the powers of ridicule and ingenuity, what he contended to be error, incapacity, negligence, and treachery in Lord Sandwich, but did not adduce proofs. When men of so astonishing force of reasoning as Burke and Fox proceed upon assumptions, a reader fairly concludes that it is from their wishes, not their conviction, that they speak. During no period had Britain so many difficulties to encounter as under the Administration of Lord Sandwich, yet did her fleets maintain the dominion of the sea against a combination of force unprecedented in history. He could not be a bad First Lord of the Admiralty, who had fleets ready to withstand the combined power of America, Holland, Spain, and France, and to vanquish the two most powerful of these nations. It was not proved that the little impression made on the enemy in the commencement of the war was owing to a deficiency in

force. The reasoning, therefore, of Burke and Fox was inconclusive. It afterwards appeared, that the opinion they professed to entertain respecting Lord Sandwich's ability and skill was wrong. In fact, it was manifest that he was able, skilful, and attentive enough in the management of our navy, to enable us to make extraordinary efforts. The violent speeches of Burke tended to inflame instead of allaying the dissensions in the navy: a very dangerous tendency at any time, especially when we were engaged in so formidable a war.

The conduct of the Howes next came to be a subject of parliamentary inquiry. It was publicly alledged by the friends of Ministry, that much more might have been done towards the subjugation of America. It was even confidently asserted that General Howe might have repeatedly ended the war, had he followed up his successes at Long Island, White Plains, the Brandy Wine, and German Town. He had complained of want of confidence and support from Ad-

ministration. Lord George Germain proved that he had furnished him with thirty thousand men, whereas General Howe said nineteen thousand were sufficient. As to confidence, so great was the trust reposed in him, that the military plans and measures were left to himself.* In 1777 the British troops amounted to forty-one thousand, and the American to twenty-three. It must, therefore, either have been something in the war itself which rendered success unattainable, in his mode of carrying it on, and not the alledged want of support and confidence from the Ministry that obstructed his exertions. It was generally reported, and never contradicted, that dissipation of every species prevailed in the army while under his command. That certainly was not the most effectual mode of subjugating America. In this case, the most partial admirers of Burke must acknowledge that he acted as a party man, as determined to throw blame on Ministers,

* See Stedman's History, vol. i. near the end.

whether they were or were not blameable. He and Mr. Fox pressed urgently for an inquiry into the conduct of the Howes. The Ministers declared they had no share in any attack upon their character, ('Whatever,' said Lord North, 'our opinion may be in certain matters') and thought an inquiry unnecessary, but did not oppose its institution. It evidently appeared, that although the vindication of the General was the ostensible object of the inquirers, the condemnation of Ministry was the real. Many of the questions that were put did not respect the Commander in Chief. Those interrogatories that were relative to him, rather regarded his general character and conduct than special proceedings. The answers of the evidences called by Howe were more in the style of general eulogium than of special exculpation. Ministry seeing that Burke and the other Opposition members were partial in their interrogatories, called in witnesses on the other side. General Robertson and Mr. Galway gave a circumstantial, particular narrative, that by

no means coincided with the opinion which Burke and Fox entertained or professed to entertain. The Opposition members, after hearing the evidence of General Robertson and Mr. Galway, moved to dissolve the committee, which was accordingly done; and so ended the inquiry.

We cannot, consistently with impartiality, credit patriotism, or indeed justice, with the carrying on an inquiry whilst it appeared to tend to one object, and when it appeared to tend to another, propose its abandonment. On the other hand, it may be observed, that if Ministers could establish proof of misconduct or neglect in General Howe, it was their duty to bring forward that proof. As no evidence has been adduced to substantiate the charges against the General, no person is warranted in imputing to him negligence or any other defect in his military conduct. The inquiry included General Burgoyne. Nothing came out, tending to impeach his military character. He had been unfortunate; but there

was no evidence that he had failed either in prosecuting advantage, or in exerting himself to ward off calamity.

A hostile manifesto from Spain, declaratory of its intention to join in the war, verified a prediction of Burke respecting the many bad consequences from the rupture with America. At the time that he resumed his just disapprobation of measures so hurtful to the country, he attacked men with less reasonable grounds. He charged Lord Sandwich with being the immediate cause of the Spanish war, by not having, in the preceding campaign, furnished the Admiral with a sufficient force to conquer the French navy. Here he again censured the Minister without substantiating the grounds.

A bill was proposed in the house to take away, for a limited time, certain exemptions from being pressed into the navy, a bill that necessity alone certainly could justify; but that, when we were on the eve of being en-

gaged in war with an additional power to those by which we were already so much annoyed, it appeared necessity did justify. The preservation of the constitution was Burke's principal object. Not admitting the necessity, he strenuously opposed such an infringement on personal liberty. This session continued to an unusual length, but ended in July.

During this campaign affairs wore a very unfavourable aspect. The combined fleets of France and Spain advanced to the channel; and the British fleet found it prudent to retire, in order to take advantage of the narrows. The campaign in America was attended with various success; but Britain was far from advancing in the object of the contest. The national expenditure was increasing in a most enormous degree. Still, however, she externally made a gallant stand, distressed and almost destroyed the commerce of the enemy. Her naval exertions, in various parts of the globe, were such as shewed that the First Lord of the

Admiralty had not been deficient in official service, and that the attacks of Fox and Burke proceeded from the spirit of party, and did not arise from that enlarged patriotism which both these personages frequently displayed. The misfortunes of Britain by no means excited that dissatisfaction which Opposition seemed to expect. Now that the nation was engaged in a war with her ancient enemies, many even of those who had disapproved of coercive measures respecting America, no longer regarded the Provincials as oppressed fellow subjects, but as the allies of foes. In Britain, therefore, there were fewer out of Parliament in opposition to Government than during the first years of the contest. The commerce and manufactures of this country had not suffered so much as had been anticipated: besides, the war found employment for a great multitude of people. The fortunes which certain persons obtained by it, together with the advantages that were held out to moneyed men, in subscribing to the public loans, occasioned a facility in raising sup-

plies, which was extremely favourable to the measures of Government, and lessened the general discernment of the calamities and dangers of the nation. But though either private interest, national animosity, or genuine patriotism made the greater number of the British satisfied with the measures of Government, very great discontents prevailed in Ireland, because the grievances under which they laboured, and to redress which Burke had endeavoured with such ability, had continued unremoved. At last it appeared that the Minister had determined to attend to the complaints of the sister kingdom. In his Majesty's speech Ireland was recommended to the particular attention of Parliament, to consider what benefits and advantages might be extended to that kingdom.

Burke's attention was this session directed principally to the affairs of Ireland, and to public œconomy. He censured Ministers for not having taken effectual steps to give

satisfaction to the Irish nation, in conformity to the address of Parliament. The discontents in that kingdom he imputed to Ministry, and considered as more dangerous than they really were, and eventually proved. Whatever subject occupied the attention of Burke made a very deep impression on his mind. In viewing it in the various lights which his versatile genius could apply to it, it often so worked upon his imagination as to transport him far beyond the bounds which much less than his extraordinary judgment might see to be prudent. In enumerating the discontents and disorders of Ireland, which he imputed to the misconduct of Ministry, his vivid and fertile imagination magnified them so much, that one who estimated the condition of that country by his speech, might have supposed it to be in a state of insurrection. He contended that Ministry were restrained by fear only from pursuing the same measures respecting Ireland as they had done concerning America.

The greatest admirers of Burke must acknowledge this was not the way to cement matters. ‘Why,’ says he, ‘have not the Ministry adopted the same measures respecting Ireland as they did respecting America? Why have they not treated Dublin as they treated Boston? Why have they not shut up the port of Dublin, burnt Cork, reduced Waterford to ashes? Why have they not prohibited all popular meetings in that kingdom, and destroyed all popular elections? Why have they not altered the usual mode of striking juries as was done by the Massachusetts Bay charter bill? Why were not the Dublin rioters brought over to this country to be tried by an English jury? Why were not the principal leaders of the Irish armed associations proscribed, and the whole kingdom declared to be in rebellion? The answer was plain and direct; the Ministry dare not.’ This passage (extracted from the Annual Register of 1780, p. 26) is a striking instance of what I have had repeatedly occasion, from the impartiality due to narration, to mention,

that when Burke attacked Ministers, he often acted the part of a violent partizan. Here, his zeal to criminate them led him to the most inflammatory eloquence. If the Irish were, as in another part of the speech he asserts, disposed to insurrection, the persuasion, which it was the object of his speech to give them, that the British Government was inclined to employ coercive measures, but restrained by fear, was not a likely mode to prevent insurrection. This much less wisdom than Burke's could have seen, if his heat at the time had not prevented reflection. In speaking of the general incapacity of Ministers, and its effects in reducing the power and glory of Britain, and imputing the employment of these Ministers to the influence of secret advisers, he compared them to the mistresses of Lewis XIV. The counsellors of Lewis finding they could not totally conquer the King's passion for the fair sex, selected the oldest and plainest women they could find, in order to correct, if not totally subdue, the lusts of the flesh. This, he said, as a po-

litical simile, was justly applicable to the King. His counsellors had managed so dexterously as to keep a set of Ministers about him, extremely well calculated to subdue his ambition, and, by a loss of a considerable part of his territories, to banish from his breast the lust of power and dominion.

Lord North proposed a system of regulations tending to give to Ireland the benefit of a free trade. Burke, though often transported by the warmth of his temper into too great violence of invective against the Minister, yet, from the liberality of his enlightened mind, was not wanting in doing him justice, when his measures appeared to him beneficial and his conduct meritorious. He approved of the regulations respecting Ireland if they should be agreeable to that country. They were received with great gratitude and applause by the Irish, who censured the English Opposition for giving only a silent acquiescence to the resolutions,

instead of supporting them by the force of their eloquence.

Burke wrote a letter to his friends in Ireland, in vindication of his own conduct. He represented, that 'till the Minister had been driven to some serious attention to the affairs of Ireland, by the measures adopted in that kingdom, his conduct had been extremely dilatory, indecisive, and equivocal: and that the Minority were justly incensed at him for having so grossly sacrificed the honour of the nation and the dignity of Parliament, as to refuse to afford any substantial relief to the Irish nation, till their own spirited exertions had made every thing that could be done by Great Britain to gratify them appear not an act of choice, but of necessity.'

Among various subjects of attack against the conduct of Administration, the waste of public money was one of the most important. Although Lord North's individual

integrity has never been impeached ; although it never has been alledged that there was any defalcation of national treasure for his own use ; it is certain that many of those employed under him made so immense fortunes as implied MORE OF PUBLIC MONEY GIVEN THAN OF PUBLIC SERVICE DONE. Besides the actual servants of Government, those who had contracts with it had much greater profits than would have arisen from a fair competition. Certain contractors were allowed terms much more advantageous than those on which others would have supplied the requisite articles equally well. Burke reprobated this profusion, both as an unnecessary, and consequently unjust expenditure of the people's money, and as a source of corrupt influence to the Crown. The waste and the influence he considered as mutually acting and re-acting on each other : that as the waste increased influence, so the influence increased the facility of waste. He had very strenuously, in a preceding session, supported a motion for excluding contractors from a seat in the

house. He now took a general review not only of the expenditure of the public revenue by the Ministers of the time, but of the general establishments, considering the various places in detail, to ascertain their public utility. After enlarging on the topics, and entering into a history and discussion of finance in other countries, he gave notice, that after the Christmas holidays he should propose a plan for the reduction of the public expenditure.

The very enormous expence of our establishments from the war, and from waste continuing to increase, the imposts began to be severely felt in the nation. The subject now awakened the attention both of the inhabitants of the metropolis and of the different counties in the kingdom. Yorkshire and London, the chief county and the chief city of the kingdom, the principal districts of landed and of monied property, took the lead in expressing alarm from an expenditure by which they were so much affected. The city of London and the

county of York each petitioned the House of Commons to adopt some plan for the reduction of expence. Other cities, counties, and towns followed this example, and established a committee of correspondence for promoting the common cause. The eyes of all were anxiously turned towards Burke, all expected his plan of reform.

On the 11th of February, 1780, he communicated to the House of Commons his ‘ plan of reform in the constitution of several parts of the public œconomy.’ This speech is replete with financial principle, accurate information as to the detail of establishments, their object and use, and embellished with all the beauties of eloquence. It is the speech of wisdom, selecting from the stores of knowledge what might be practically beneficial. The orations of Burke, especially those on great and comprehensive questions, abound in general observations, drawn from the most profound philosophy ; which have the double merit of being in their place specially applicable to the object

in consideration, and to a variety of other situations and circumstances in the conduct of life. From his speeches and writings might be formed a collection of moral and political maxims of the strictest truth and highest importance, but which are not introduced in an abstract form: they are made to bear immediately upon the case. On the principles of national revenue he displays an enlarged view of the subject, which shews a mind capable of writing a treatise on the nature and causes of the wealth of nations. Nor could Smith himself, whose penetrating, investigating, and generalizing mind, the details and principles of finance so much and so long occupied, have displayed more complete knowledge and philosophical views than this speech of Burke, who attended to revenue, among a multiplicity of momentous objects: at the same time so minute is his acquaintance with offices, that he appears fit to have composed a court-calendar without copying from the red-book. His introduction is, perhaps, one of the most masterly that ever served

to usher in a piece of eloquence. In that part in which he speaks of the difficulties he must encounter in conducting a plan of reform, a reform bearing on private interest and lessening private emolument, he is peculiarly excellent. What he says applied precisely to that individual case, and would apply in general to any situation in which it was proposed to sacrifice individual gain from donative to general good in the retrenchment of unnecessary expence. 'I feel,' says he, 'that I engage in a business in itself most ungracious. I know that all parsimony is of a quality approaching to unkindness; and that (on some person or other) every reform must operate as a sort of punishment: indeed the whole class of the severe and restrictive virtues are at a market almost too high for humanity; what is worse, there are very few of those virtues which are not capable of being imitated, and even outdone in many of their most striking effects, by the worst of vices. Malignity and envy will carve much more deeply, and finish much more sharply, in

the work of retrenchment, than frugality and providence. I do not, therefore, wonder that gentlemen have kept away from such a task, as well from good nature, as from prudence. Private feeling might, indeed, be overborne by legislative reason ; and a man of long-sighted and strong nerved humanity might bring himself, not so much to consider from whom he takes a superfluous enjoyment, as for whom, in the end, he may preserve the absolute necessities of life.* He lays down certain rules of political œconomy, which he applies to the various cases he details, and to the establishments which he would retrench : considering various establishments as wasteful, because employed in a manner neither tending to reproduction or to security of what is by other means produced ; and hurtful, as the means of corruption. His principle is, that whatever establishments are either more expensive than gainful, or afford the means of corruption more than advantage to judicial and political administration, ought to be abolished. This general principle he

applies to certain jurisdictions, public estates, offices, and modes of disbursement.

On jurisdictions, he proves by accurate documents, and conclusive arguments, that the inferior jurisdictions of the Sovereign, attended with considerable expence, do not answer any purpose which might not be better effected without the expence of those establishments, in the supreme character of Sovereign. On this part, together with the most authentic detail, the basis of the ablest and serious reasoning, there is mixed a great degree of pleasantry and humour. Speaking of the characters with which the Sovereign is invested in different parts of South-Britain, he says, ‘ the monarchy is divided into five several distinct principalities, besides the supreme: as in the itinerant exhibitions of the stage, they are obliged to throw a variety of parts on their chief performer; so our Sovereign condescends himself to act, not only the principal but the subordinate parts. Cross a brook, and you lose the King of England; but you

have some comfort in coming again under his Majesty, though *shorn of his beams*, and no more than Prince of Wales. Go to the north, and you find him dwindled to a Duke of Lancaster. Turn to the west of that north, and he pops upon you in the humble character of Earl of Chester. Travel a few miles on, the Earl of Chester disappears, and the King surprises you again as Count Palatine of Lancaster. You find him once more in his incognito, and he is Duke of Cornwall. So that quite fatigued and satiated with this dull variety, you are infinitely refreshed when you return to the sphere of his proper splendour, and behold your amiable Sovereign in his true, simple, undisguised, native character of Majesty. He proposes, that as these jurisdictions are expensive, without producing public advantage, and are the means of corrupt influence, they should be abolished. He applies the same principles to the Crown demesnes and the annexed offices; but dwells most particularly on the household. Many have ridiculed the minuteness of his detail

here; but if he was right as to fact, the particularity of his attention was certainly very meritorious: whatever saving could take place, without lessening the King's power of every constitutional exertion, was an advantage to the nation.

In the former edition I touched rather cursorily on the scheme of reduction. The following were its principal objects. It proposed to abolish the offices of Treasurer, Comptroller, Cofferer, and Master of the Household; the Treasurer of the Chamber; the whole Board of Green-Cloth; a number of subordinate offices in the department of the Steward of the Household; the Wardrobe and Jewel Offices; the Board of Works; and a great part of the civil branch of the Board of Ordnance. These reductions would, he said, greatly diminish both corruption and expenditure without impeding public service. He proposed also to abolish subordinate treasuries, and of course the Pay-Offices of the Army and Navy; that these offices should be no longer *banks or treasuries*,

but mere *offices of administration* ; and that all money which was formerly imprested to them, should in future be imprested to the Bank of England. He would, likewise, have the business of the Mint, excepting what related to it as a manufactory, transferred to that great corporation. The plan went to the total removal of the subordinate treasury and office of the Pay-master of the Pensions ; the payments being in future to be made by the Exchequer ; the great patent offices of the Exchequer to be reduced to fixed salaries, as the present lives and reversions should successively fall ; the several places of Keepers of the Stag-hounds, Buck-hounds, Fox-hounds, and Harriers, to be totally abolished. He also proposed to reform the new office of third Secretary of State, commonly called Secretary of State for the Colonies ; the fabrication of which, like that of all other late arrangements, he considered merely as a job, the two antient Secretaries being supposed now, as heretofore, fully competent to the whole of the public business. He concluded his plan of

reduction, by proposing the entire annihilation of the Board of Trade, as an office totally useless, answering none of its avowed, or supposed purposes, and serving merely to provide eight members for Parliament, and thereby to retain their services. He also proposed a limitation of pensions to 60,000l. a year ; but he did not propose to take away any man's present pension, and thought it more prudent in that respect not to adhere to the letter of the petitions.

To this plan of reduction he subjoined a plan of arrangement. This he professed to be his favourite part of the scheme, as he conceived it would effectually prevent all prodigality in the Civil List in future. He proposed to establish a fixed and invariable order in all payments, from which the First Lord of the Treasury should not be permitted, upon any pretence whatever, to deviate. For this purpose, he divided the Civil List payments into nine classes, putting each class forward according to the impor-

tance or justice of the demand, or to the inability of the persons entitled to enforce their pretensions. In the first of these classes were placed the judges ; the ministers to foreign courts in the second ; tradesmen who supplied the Crown in the third ; domestic servants of the King, and all persons in efficient offices, with salaries not above 200l. a year, in the fourth ; the pensions and allowances of the royal family, including the privy-purse, and the Queen's, composed the fifth class ; the sixth contained those whose efficient offices exceeded 200l. a year ; the seventh included the whole pension list ; the eighth the honorary offices about the King ; the ninth consisted of the salaries of the First Lord of the Treasury himself, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the other Commissioners of that department. To these regulations were added other arrangements, precluding the possibility of future debts being incurred on the civil list, which should call on the public for liquidation.

Such are the outlines of the scheme for the reduction of expenditure, and the diminution of corrupt influence, by Mr. Burke in his famous Economy Bill.

The following passages also shew the force and versatility of Burke's humour :—
 ' Lord Talbot's scheme of œconomy was dashed to pieces ; his department became more expensive than ever ;—the civil list debt accumulated. Why ? It was truly from a cause, which, though perfectly adequate to the effect, one would not have instantly guessed ;—it was because the *turnspit in the King's kitchen was a member of Parliament*. The King's domestic servants were all undone ; his tradesmen remained unpaid, and became bankrupt ;—*because the turnspit of the King's kitchen was a member of Parliament*. His Majesty's slumbers were interrupted, his pillow was stuffed with thorns, and his peace of mind entirely broken,—*because the King's turnspit was a member of Parliament*. The judges were unpaid ; the justice of the kingdom bent and gave way ;

the Foreign Ministers remained inactive and unprovided; the system of Europe was dissolved; the chain of our alliances was broken; all the wheels of government at home and abroad were stopped;—*because the King's turnspit was a member of Parliament.*—‘The household troops form an army, who will be ready to mutiny for want of pay, and whose mutiny will be really dreadful to a Commander in Chief. A rebellion of the thirteen Lords of the bed-chamber would be far more terrible to a Minister, and would probably affect his power more to the quick, than a revolt of thirteen colonies. What an uproar such an event would create at court! What *petitions*, and *committees*, and *associations* would it not produce! Bless me! what a clattering of white sticks and yellow sticks would be about his head!—what a storm of gold keys would fly about the ears of the Minister!—what a shower of Georges, and Thistles, and medals, and collars of S. S. would assail him at his first entrance into the anti-chamber, after an insolvent Christmas quar-

ter ! A tumult which could not be appeased by all the harmony of the New Year's Ode.'

The individuals affected by his reform (after it had fallen much short of his intention) have inveighed bitterly against Burke for diminishing their profits. That, no doubt, was a serious concern to *themselves and those interested in their prosperity* ; but it could be no reason to prevent a patriot from proposing reduction of useless expence, that some had gained by it. If a man find it prudent to dismiss supernumerary footmen, or housemaids, he ought not to be deterred by the consideration, that it would be more agreeable to these persons to live upon him, though doing nothing in return. He went through offices of a higher description than those of the mere menials of the household, and proposed the reduction of various places in the civil list, in which either there was pay without service, or where the pay greatly exceeded the service. An impartial examiner must admit the justness and com-

prehensiveness of Burke's general principles of political œconomy, the accuracy of his details of office, and the applicability of his principles to those details: he must acknowledge that considerable saving would have accrued to the nation from the general adoption of his plan, as indeed there did even from the partial. Their utility would have been much greater if they could be applied to infinitely more momentous departments of public expence than any within the civil list, to the ordnance, the navy, and the army. The necessary expenditure in these is so very considerable, that there is a much greater probability of waste, and opportunity of mismanagement or even intentional misapplication, than in the *comparatively* confined expenditure of the civil list. From the general political principles of Burke, together with his particular financial principles, it is probable that if he had fully succeeded in his first plan of reform, he would have afterwards extended their operation to the larger sources of expence. Ministers joined with Opposition in bestow-

ing the highest applause, not on his eloquence only, but on his financial principles. When, however, the principles came to be applied to the particular plans of reform, they did not accede. Burke grounded four bills on his plan, which, after much discussion, were at length rejected.

A new law was proposed this session for excluding contractors from Parliament, and very ably supported by Burke, Fox, and Dunning, and passed the House of Commons. During the discussion of Burke's bill, Mr. Dunning, after enlarging very much on the influence of the Crown, and endeavouring to shew that it was attended with most pernicious effects, moved the famous resolution, that '*the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished.*' This resolution was supported by Fox, Burke, and the whole force of Opposition, with such effect, that, to the surprise and alarm of Administration, and probably to the astonishment of the mover himself, it was carried by a majority

of 233 to 215, and on it several other resolutions were grounded. Although this majority was of no long duration on the side of Opposition, it afforded them well grounded hopes that their warfare against the Minister would be at last successful. The country gentlemen had been so moved by the state of public affairs as described by Dunning, Fox, and Burke, that they were staggered in their opinion of Lord North; and though, after a short dereliction, they again returned to him, it was probable that the increasing burdens from the war, joined to the forcible eloquence of the Opposition leaders, would induce them entirely to abandon Administration; as afterwards took place. On the general ground of diminishing the influence of the Crown, a bill was proposed under the auspices of Burke, for preventing revenue officers from voting at elections, but rejected by a small majority. The bill for excluding contractors was lost in the House of Lords. Whether Lord North had suffered it to pass without much opposition in the House of Commons, from

either a foreknowledge or predestination of its fate in the upper house, or that he did not actually disapprove of it, I cannot determine. The exclusion of the contractors would probably, in some degree, have promoted Burke's twofold object, restriction of profusion and diminution of corruption.

A motion was made by General Conway for reconciliation with America. It proposed to remove all their just complaints, but not to acknowledge their independence. It was opposed by the Ministers, who thought it humiliating as to this nation, and ineffectual as to the object. It was very faintly supported by Burke and the Rockingham part of Opposition, who thought it totally inadequate to the objects.

Although the eminent abilities of Burke had not succeeded in procuring in Parliament the desired reduction of expence, as associations continued to be formed by men of talents and property, both in London and other parts of England, the object of which

was reform ; an object which they expected ultimately to obtain. Meanwhile, an association for a very different purpose, and composed of very different persons, gave rise to proceedings of the most disorderly and licentious kind. A Protestant association had been formed in England, consisting of persons of nearly the same rank and character which composed that of Scotland ; persons, who, though many of them were well meaning friends to the Protestant religion, were generally ignorant, and estimated Popery by its former, not its modern state ; and who were for applying towards Papists that intolerant spirit which constituted one of the worst qualities of Popery during the ages of ignorant credulity and clerical usurpation. No man of liberal sentiments, of any party, had any connection with them : they consisted chiefly of persons equally low in rank with those who, in latter times, make up the bulk of the London Corresponding Society. Their object was to procure the repeal of the law of 1778. They framed a petition to Parliament, to

which one hundred and twenty thousand of those enlightened theologians put either their names or their marks. It was resolved, that as many of the petitioners as possible should attend at the presentment of their petition. An advertisement for that purpose, signed by Lord George Gordon, was issued. Fifty thousand, at least, assembled with this view, June the 2d, in St. George's Fields: thence they proceeded to the House of Commons, where their petition was presented by their President. The theologians insulted several members of both parties in Parliament. A mob, whether of Protestant associators, other rabble, or both, displayed their zeal in fire-brands, and burnt several popish buildings. The outrages continued, and rapidly extended to the persons and houses of others as well as Roman Catholics. The prisons were destroyed, and their inhabitants let loose, to co-operate with the mob. London, for a week, was the scene of uproar, plunder, and conflagration; the military force only saved the city from destruc-

tion. Such are the effects of demagogues, under whatever pretence, inflaming the populace by false representations of grievances. Burke's house and his person also were threatened, as being a strong supporter of Sir George Saville's bill, and suspected to be a Roman Catholic. He was represented in some of the papers as a Jesuit in disguise; and in the print-shops he was exhibited in the dress of a Friar, trimming and fomenting the fires of Smithfield. All this vulgar calumny he treated with contempt. The nickname, Neddy St. Omers, he was constantly called, and the public actually believed that he had been brought up at that seminary, a calumny which he never thought worth confuting. He always treated common abuse with indifference, and, perhaps, no man experienced more of it. It is worthy of observation, that through his political life he was more vehemently blamed and abused by his censurers, and more rapturously praised and even adored by his admirers, than perhaps any man that ever lived.

The effects which the riots produced on the public mind deserve notice. Previously to this period an English mob was generally considered as a test of the public opinion, the overflowing of popular energy; and military interference was deemed highly dangerous, if not altogether unconstitutional. This seemed to be the opinion of the Duke of Newcastle when he kept a mob in pay, ready trained and disciplined, to support the then recent accession of the house of Hanover, and to suppress Tory mobs; a mode of conduct which had a more successful, or at least a more popular effect than having recourse to military force. The Newcastle mob, as it was called, was long remembered with respect.

The conduct of the mob of 1780 destroyed for ever the credit and consequence of such a body. This has been, upon the whole, deemed very fortunate for the internal peace of the country, as it has taught Government to oppose the smallest beginnings of riot or

popular commotion ; a lesson which seems peculiarly important at the present time.

Burke seemed to have adopted the sentiments of Horace, at least, with respect to a mob—

Odi profanum vulgus et arceo.

He even attended popular elections with apparent reluctance.

As soon as the peace of the metropolis was restored, and the Parliament assembled as usual, Burke was indefatigable in his inquiries respecting the cause and progress of the riots, and in procuring a full recompence for all who had given in an estimate of their loss. There was no deduction made from any account of this kind, so much did the public resent the outrages which had been committed.

Notwithstanding the disgrace which was incurred by the Protestant association, and their President sent to the Tower, their

committee still attended the lobby of the House of Commons, disclaiming all connection with the rioters, and praying, or rather demanding attention to their petition. Burke could not behold those gentlemen without visible marks of indignation, and was heard to say within their hearing, *I am astonished those men can have the audacity still to nose Parliament!* The general panic, however, had not yet completely subsided; the Parliament wishing to satisfy the association, brought in a bill by way of compromise,—to prevent Roman Catholics from teaching Protestants; a measure which was supposed both conciliatory and innoxious, as very few of that religion were teachers. Burke was decidedly against any law which satisfied the mob, or was likely to oppress any innocent individual: he discovered that a few persons would be affected by the proposed measure, and these he got to sign a petition, which he himself drew up, and in which he painted the proceedings of the Protestant association in very unfavourable colours. The petition was, however, supported only

by eight members; and the bill having passed the Commons, was carried to the House of Lords. Burke still opposed it with all possible private opposition; he applied separately to many of the Lords, and, with his usual eloquence, represented the measure as impolitic, cruel, and absurd. Lord Thurlow, who had been lately made Chancellor, encouraged him to have the Lords petitioned, as the Commons were. This being done on the third reading, his Lordship left the woolsack, and, in a speech of great energy and eloquence, reprobated the bill so successfully as to have it rejected without a division. This was a great triumph for Burke. He told some of his friends, who praised the composition of the petition, that it should *be published in all the newspapers in England*: it never was, however, published; but a part of it, with some variations, was afterwards introduced into his famous speech to the citizens of Bristol.

The employment of the military, without being called by the civil magistrate, was

certainly not a desirable measure, but at that time absolutely necessary. The lawless outrages of the mob, originating in a popular association, damped associations for the retrenchment of expence:—so inimical are democratical societies in their tendency and effects to moderate reform. No man reprobated the outrageous wickedness and madness of the mob more strongly than Burke: no man was at once a more zealous friend of constitutional liberty and a more determined enemy of popular licentiousness. As none possessed more extensive knowledge of ancient and modern history, and politics, or more wisdom to compare and estimate the tendency and effects of different governments, none could better appreciate the value of the constitution of his country. This session, in which Burke had borne so conspicuous a part, was closed on the 8th of July; and soon after, this Parliament, of which he had been so active, able, and leading a member, was dissolved.

Burke finding that his support of the trade of Ireland, a support, after many

difficulties, at last successful, had displeased a great part of his constituents, resolved to decline standing for Bristol. Previously to the election he made a very masterly speech, comprehending an account of the proceedings of Parliament, and the principles on which he himself had acted. ‘ I decline,’ said he, ‘ the election. It has ever been my rule through life, to observe a proportion between my efforts and my objects. I have never been remarkable for a bold, active, and sanguine pursuit of advantages that are personal to myself.

‘ I have not canvassed the whole of this city in form ; but I have taken such a view of it, as satisfies my own mind that your choice will not ultimately fall upon me. Your city, gentlemen, is in a state of miserable distraction ; and I am resolved to withdraw, whatever share my pretensions may have had in its unhappy divisions. I have not been in haste. I have tried all prudent means. I have waited for the effect of all contingencies. If I were fond of a contest, by the partiality of my nu-

merous friends (whom you know to be among the most weighty and respectable people of the city) I have the means of a sharp one in my hands. But I thought it far better, with my strength unspent, and my reputation unimpaired, to do early, and from foresight, that which I might be obliged to do from necessity at last.

‘ I am not in the least surprised, nor in the least angry at this view of things. I have read the book of life for a long time; and I have read other books a little. Nothing has happened to me but what has happened to men much better than me, and in times and in nations full as good as the age and country that we live in. To say that I am no way concerned, would be neither decent nor true. The representation of Bristol was an object, on many accounts, dear to me ; and I certainly should very far prefer it to any other in the kingdom. My habits are made to it, and it is in general more unpleasant to be rejected after long trial, than not to be chosen at all.

‘ But, gentlemen, I will see nothing except your former kindness, and I will give way to no other sentiments than those of gratitude. From the bottom of my heart I thank you for what you have done for me. You have given me a long term, which is now expired. I have performed all the conditions, and enjoyed all the profits to the full; and I now surrender your estate into your hands, without being in a single tile, or a single stone, impaired or wasted by my use. I have served the public for fifteen years. I have served you in particular for six. What is past is well stored. It is safe, and out of the power of fortune. What is to come is in wiser hands than ours; and he, in whose hands it is, best knows whether it is best for you and me that I should be in Parliament, or even in the world.’

In speaking of a bill which had passed in 1779, (moved by Lord Beauchamp) to prevent imprisonment for small debts, he delivered his sentiments concerning the debtor laws in general, and the general question of

imprisonment for debt. ‘ There are,’ he says, ‘ two capital faults in our law, with relation to civil debts. One is, that every man is presumed solvent ; a presumption, in innumerable cases, directly against truth. Therefore the debtor is ordered, on a supposition of ability and fraud, to be coerced his liberty until he makes payment. By this means, in all cases of civil insolvency, without a pardon from his creditor, he is to be imprisoned for life. And thus a miserable mistaken invention of artificial science operates to change a civil into a criminal judgment, and to scourge misfortune or indiscretion with a punishment which the law does not inflict on very great crimes.

‘ The next fault is, that the inflicting of that punishment is not on the opinion of an equal and a public judge ; but is referred to the arbitrary discretion of a private, nay, interested and irritated individual. He who formally is, and substantially ought to be, the judge, is in reality no more than ministerial, a mere executive

instrument of a private man, who is at once judge and party. Every idea of judicial order is subverted by this procedure. If the insolvency be no crime, why is it punished with arbitrary imprisonment? If it be a crime, why is it delivered into private hands to pardon without discretion, or to punish without mercy and without measure?

The opinion and sentiments of Burke on this subject coincide with that of his sage friend, Johnson, who, in his *Idler*, No. 22, maintains the injustice and impolicy of imprisonment for debt at the pleasure of the creditor. 'The end,' says he, 'of all civil regulations is to secure private happiness from private malignity; to keep individuals from the power of one another: but this end is apparently neglected, when a man, irritated with loss, is allowed to be the judge of his own cause, and to assign the punishment of his own pain; when the distinction between guilt and happiness, between casualty and design, is entrusted to eyes blind

with interest, to understandings depraved by resentment.'—'There can be no reason why any debtor should be imprisoned, but that he may be compelled to payment; and a term should therefore be fixed, in which the creditor should exhibit his accusation of concealed property. If such property can be discovered, let it be given to the creditor; if the charge is not offered, or cannot be proved, let the prisoner be dismissed.' These are the opinions of two very great men on this subject. Perhaps it may be thought that they consider the debtor too much, and the creditor too little. Were a mitigation of confinement compatible with the security of property, were it practicable to compel, in every case, the debtor to give up his effects to the creditor, as from effects, not person, his reimbursement must proceed, confinement might appear no longer to answer any just purpose to the creditor. The creditor would then lose nothing, and the labour of the debtor be restored to society. If a diminution of misery be consistent with the recovery of

right, if the debtor may be relieved and the creditor not incur loss, we may expect it from the humanity, knowledge, and discrimination of that learned, able, and benevolent nobleman who has undertaken the cause of the unfortunate. In speaking of prisons, Burke takes occasion to bestow a very just and very eloquent encomium on the philanthropic Howard. ' I cannot name Mr. Howard without remarking, that his labours and writings have done much to open the eyes and hearts of mankind. He has visited all Europe, not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces, or the stateliness of temples; not to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur, nor to form a scale of the curiosity of modern art; not to collect medals, or collate manuscripts; but to dive into the depth of dungeons, to plunge into the infection of hospitals, to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain, to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt; to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken, and to compare and col-

late the distresses of all men in all countries. His plan is original, and it is full of genius as it is of humanity. It was a voyage of discovery ; a circumnavigation of charity. Already the benefit of his labour is felt more or less in every country ; I hope he will anticipate his final reward, by seeing all its effects fully realized in his own. He will receive not by retail, but in gross, the reward of those who visit the prisoner ; and he has so forestalled and monopolized this branch of charity, that there will be, I trust, little room to merit by such acts of benevolence hereafter.'

It was in the same speech that he gave a view of the Popish penal laws ; with the characters of Sir George Saville and Mr. Dunning. ' The condition,' he observed, ' of our nature is such, that we buy our blessings at a price. The Reformation, one of the greatest periods of human improvement, was a time of trouble and confusion. The vast structure of superstition and tyranny, which had been for ages in rearing,

and which was combined with the interest of the great and of the many ; which was moulded into the laws, the manners, and civil institutions of nations, and blended with the frame and policy of states ; could not be brought to the ground without a fearful struggle, nor could it fall without a violent concussion. It was long before the spirit of true piety and wisdom, involved in the principles of the Reformation, could be departed from the dregs and feculence of the contention with which it was carried through.' Mr. Burke then entered into a detail of the various penal statutes, and particularly of that which had been lately repealed, and mentioned several facts manifesting its badness. ' Gentlemen,' said he, ' bad laws are the worst sort of tyranny. In such a country as this, they are of all bad things the worst ; worse by far than any where else ; and they derive a particular malignity even from the wisdom and soundness of the rest of our institutions. For very obvious reasons, you cannot trust the Crown with a dispensing power over any of

your laws. However, a government, be it as bad as it may, will, in the exercise of a discretionary power, discriminate times and persons ; and will not ordinarily pursue any man, when its own safety is not concerned. A mercenary informer knows no distinction. Under such a system, the obnoxious people are slaves, not only to the government, but they live at the mercy of every individual ; they are at once the slaves of the whole community, and of every part of it : and the worst and most unmerciful men are those on whose goodness they most depend. In this situation men not only shrink from the frowns of a stern magistrate, but they are obliged to fly from their very species. The seeds of destruction are sown in civil intercourse, in social habitudes. The blood of wholesome kindred is infected. Their tables and beds are surrounded with snares. All the means given by Providence to make life safe and comfortable, are perverted into instruments of terror and torment. This species of universal subserviency, that makes the very servant who waits behind your

chair the arbiter of your life and fortune, has such a tendency to degrade and abase mankind, and to deprive them of that assured and liberal state of mind, which alone can make us what we ought to be, that I vow to God I would sooner bring myself to put a man to immediate death for opinions I disliked, and so to get rid of the man and his opinions at once, than to fret him with a feverish being, tainted with the jail-distemper of a contagious servitude, to keep him above ground, an animated mass of putrefaction, corrupted himself, and corrupting all about him. The act repealed was of this direct tendency, and it was made in the manner which I have related to you. I will now tell you by whom the bill of repeal was brought into Parliament. I find it has been industriously given out in this city, (from kindness to me unquestionably) that I was the mover or the seconder. The fact is, I did not once open my lips on the subject during the whole progress of the bill. That great work was in hands in every respect far better qualified than mine.

The mover of the bill was Sir George Savile.' Of that gentleman, and its seconder, Mr. Dunning, Mr. Burke then draws the following character ;

' When an act of great and signal humanity was to be done, and done with all the weight and authority that belonged to it, the world could cast its eyes upon none but him. I hope that few things, which have a tendency to bless or to adorn life, have wholly escaped my observation in my passage through it. I have sought the acquaintance of that gentleman, and have seen him in all situations. He is a true genius ; with an understanding vigorous, and acute, and refined, and distinguishing even to excess ; and illuminated with a most unbounded, peculiar, and original cast of imagination. With these he possesses many external and instrumental advantages ; and he makes use of them all. His fortune is among the largest ; a fortune which, wholly unincumbered, as it is, with one single

charge from luxury, vanity, or excess, sinks under the benevolence of its dispenser. This private benevolence, expanding itself into patriotism, renders his whole being the estate of the public, in which he has not reserved a *peculium* for himself of profit, diversion, or relaxation. During the session, the first in, and the last out of the House of Commons; he passes from the senate to the camp; and, seldom seeing the seat of his ancestors, he is always in parliament to serve his country, or in the field to defend it. But in all well-wrought compositions, some particulars stand out more eminently than the rest; and the things which will carry his name to posterity are his two bills; I mean that for a limitation of the claims of the Crown upon landed estates; and this for the relief of the Roman Catholics. By the former, he has emancipated property; by the latter, he has quieted conscience; and by both, he has taught that grand lesson to government and subject,—no longer to regard each other as adverse parties.

* Such was the mover of the act that is complained of by men, who are not quite so good as he is; an act, most assuredly not brought in by him from any partiality to that sect which is the object of it. For, among his faults, I really cannot help reckoning a greater degree of prejudice against that people than becomes so wise a man. I know that he inclines to a sort of disgust, mixed with a considerable degree of asperity, to the system; and he has few, or rather no habits with any of its professors. What he has done was on quite other motives. The motives were these, which he declared in his excellent speech on his motion for the bill; namely, his extreme zeal to the Protestant religion, which he thought utterly disgraced by the act of 1699; and his rooted hatred to all kind of oppression, under any colour or upon any pretence whatsoever.

‘ The seconder was worthy of the mover, and the motion. I was not the seconder; it was Mr. Dunning, Recorder of this city.

I shall say the less of him, because his near relation to you makes you more particularly acquainted with his merits. But I should appear little acquainted with them, or little sensible of them, If I could utter his name on this occasion without expressing my esteem for his character. I am not afraid of offending a most learned body, and most jealous of its reputation for that learning, when I say he is the first of his profession. It is a point settled by those who settle every thing else; and I must add, (what I am enabled to say from my own long and close observation) that there is not a man, of any profession, or in any situation, of a more erect and independent spirit; of a more proud honour; a more manly mind; a more firm and determined integrity. Assure yourselves, that the names of two such men will bear a great load of prejudice in the other scale, before they can be entirely outweighed.

Then follows his account of the comparative authority of the supporters and the

opponents of the repeal of the act in question :

• With this mover and this seconder agreed the *whole* House of Commons ; the *whole* House of Lords ; the *whole* bench of Bishops ; the King ; the Ministry ; the Opposition ; all the distinguished clergy of the establishment ; all the eminent lights (for they were consulted) of the Dissenting churches. This according voice of national wisdom ought to be listened to with reverence. To say that all these descriptions of Englishmen unanimously concurred in a scheme for introducing the Catholic religion, or that none of them understood the nature and effects of what they were doing, so well as a few obscure clubs of people, whose names you never heard of, is shamelessly absurd. Surely it is paying a miserable compliment to the religion we profess, to suggest, that every thing eminent in the kingdom is indifferent, or even adverse to that religion, and that its security is wholly abandoned to the zeal of those, who have

nothing but their zeal to distinguish them. In weighing this unanimous concurrence of, whatever the nation has to boast of, I hope you will recollect, that all these concurring parties do by no means love one another enough to agree in any point, which was not both evidently, and, importantly, right.

During the year 1780, affairs in America, and indeed in Europe, wore a more favourable appearance to Britain. Charlestown and the whole province of South Carolina were reduced; and the British forces made every exertion that courage and conduct could produce. Still, however, the Americans exhibited no signs of submission. The authority of Britain was acknowledged in no part, but those occupied by her forces. A hatred of the mother country was generally prevalent throughout the colonies. In Europe, Admiral Rodney had, by a signal victory over the Spanish fleet, displayed the valour and superior skill of the British navy. He led his victorious fleet to the West

Indies, and there maintained the pre-eminence of our fleets by considerable advantages, a prelude to a decisive victory, equalling any in the former annals of British glory, though since equalled by the victories of the present war, of the present year, and of the present month.* The efforts of Rodney could not have been successful, but with a force that shewed that the First Lord of the Admiralty was not inattentive to his duty ; and that Burke, in his imputation of negligence and incapacity to Lord Sandwich, was a party speaker, not an impartial thinker.

From the commencement of the American war, Holland had leaned to the colonies, and had supplied them with stores. After France and Spain had become hostile to Britain, she had also supplied those nations with warlike stores, contrary to the general principles of neutrality and particular treaties subsisting between her and Britain.

* Written Oct. 19, 1797.

Various remonstrances on this subject had been made to the Dutch, which were disregarded. The Ministry, therefore, resolving to imitate the example of the illustrious Pitt during the former war, gave orders for the seizure of ships laden with contraband goods. This order was rigorously executed; the Dutch ships were searched, and contraband articles taken from them; the full value being paid to the owners. The Dutch, very unreasonably, complained of this proceeding. The British seeing them hostilely inclined, in order to put their disposition to the test, demanded succours stipulated by treaty. To this the States-General returned no satisfactory answer. It appeared evident that Holland had determined to abandon Britain, and join her enemies. The northern powers entered into an association for promoting a scheme that altered the received law of nations concerning the right of neutral states to carry naval stores to the belligerent powers, and notified to the states at war, that they had prepared an armed force for

protecting every species of neutral trade. It was evident to every one acquainted with the maritime power and situation of the several nations, that this plan, ostensibly impartial, was really meant to injure Britain. Thus, from Norway to Spain, the naval powers were either avowedly hostile, or really inimical to Great Britain. All Europe seemed to have combined to pull down her naval power. Such a situation, though alarming, was not without its use. It had a tendency to STIMULATE THE EXERTIONS OF EVERY TRUE LOVER OF HIS COUNTRY, AND TO SACRIFICE NARROWNESS OF PARTY SPIRIT TO GENUINE PATRIOTISM. The question was not now, were or were we not right in attempting to impose taxes on America, but what were the most efficacious means for defending ourselves against so formidable a combination? Those were to be considered as true patriots, not who declaimed most fluently against the war, but who endeavoured to find out the most efficacious measures for national vigour, as the only means of peace. Out of Parliament, disappro-

bation of the individual Ministers was in many absorbed in their wishes to support Government in general.

On February 19th, 1781, Burke revived his plan of œconomy, in hopes of better success than he had experienced the preceding session. He supported his motion by a speech necessarily consisting, as the subject was the same, of many arguments similar to those which he had used the year before ; but there was a great accession of new reasoning, new imagery, new illustrations, which the extent of his knowledge and fertility of his invention never failed to throw on any subject, however much it might to other orators appear exhausted.

A circumstance distinct from the intrinsic merit of the question rendered it at this time remarkable : on it WILLIAM PITT made his first speech in the House of Commons.

Mr. Pitt was now in the twenty-second year of his age, when he entered Parlia-

ment, with the expectations of all ranks and parties highly excited in his favour. It was publicly known that the illustrious Earl of Chatham had conceived the highest opinion of the talents and acquirements of his second son. William had been educated and formed under the eye of that eminent statesman, who, oppressed with bodily infirmities, immersed in public business, and loaded with years, with the most earnest anxiety and delight tutored and directed the opening understanding of his favourite son. From his earliest age the youth had given the most undoubted proofs of intellectual vigour. A regular, judicious, and persevering application did justice to his great powers. After he had acquired a considerable share of classical literature, he applied himself sedulously to mathematical studies. This branch of learning was probably instrumental in forming his masculine understanding to the precision of thought and closeness of argument which distinguish his speeches. He was sent to an University, of which the exercises have a peculiar ten-

dency to sharpen, invigorate, methodize, and expand the mind; and soon impressed both the scholars and masters of Cambridge with an idea of the superior figure he was destined to make. Devoting himself to the studies most prevalent at his college, more, as Burke had done at Dublin, for the sake of acquirement than display, he also treasured up in his mind moral and political history and science. Nature had given him uncommon talents. The plan of his education was peculiarly adapted for forming and strengthening his faculties, his own choice afforded him the most useful materials, and his judgment directed his powers and exertions to the most important objects. So qualified and prepared, on leaving the University, he betook himself to the study of the law; and with his powers, previous acquirements, and persevering industry, made very distinguished progress. He early formed one of the most beneficial habits which an understanding can contract—a habit of INDUCTION, or of thoroughly examining particulars before he admitted a

general principle in any new case; and when he did admit a principle, he accustomed himself to consider it in its application to the circumstances and situations, and not to receive it implicitly, and without the proper limits and qualifications. Perhaps, indeed, there is not a more striking difference between the reasonings of the personage before us and his great opponent, than in the extent in which each adopts a general principle. The former squares it to the case, the latter often takes it in a much greater latitude than will apply to the case. This difference, however, respects the appositeness of the means to the end. Mr. Pitt not only formed a habit of just and apposite thinking, but of reasoning to the point at issue, and to no other. To this appropriation, the studies to which, from his father's recommendation, and his own choice, Mr. Pitt devoted a considerable part of his time, were peculiarly subservient. He applied himself with great assiduity to mathematics; and while, by geometry, he improved himself in clearness of argument,

and precision of thought, he, by algebraical exercises, increased the natural facility with which he invented or discovered proofs. Persevering industry accompanied and assisted the endowments of genius: his progress in erudition and science was uncommon.* His moral qualities and habits greatly facilitated the operations of his intellect: he was untainted by the dissipation which often diverts to improper objects the force of very great minds, and by that debauchery which precludes confident reliance on the exertions of its votaries, however extraordinary their genius may be, and even weakens the faculties themselves. He had a firmness of temper which steadily pursued what he perceived to be right; and adhered to his own plans of conduct, undisturbed by the ridicule of frivolity, and unseduced by the allurements of vice. His relaxations from study and business tended to the improvement of his understanding. Rational conviviality with men of talents

* See the Historical Magazine, June 1799.

and knowledge gave to discourse and discussion hours bestowed by many young men on the licentiousness of the stews, or the phrenzy of the gaming-table.

His contemporaries at Cambridge proposed that he should stand candidate for representing the University in Parliament: this he declined, and was returned member for Poole. His first public appearance had been two years before his election. Soon after his father's death, a report had been spread of a negociation having gone on the preceding winter, between Lord Chatham and Lord Bute, for Chatham coming into Administration. Some said that Lord Bute had applied to Chatham, others that Chatham had applied to Bute. This last supposition, with great reason, Pitt considered as derogatory to his father. A statement, published by the Chatham family, and drawn up by Pitt, was considered by Lord Mountstuart as tending to convey an idea that his father had applied to Chatham. In endeavouring to refute that notion, he

advanced some observations calculated to make it appear that Lord Catham had applied to Lord Bute. Mountstuart, a sensible, well informed, experienced man, on the one side, and Pitt, a youth of nineteen, on the other, entered into discussion of the subject. Pitt manifested a striking superiority in genius and reasoning.

In his speech on Burke's reform, Pitt acquitted himself so as to justify the anticipations of the public in his favour. He in some measure joined the party which Burke and Fox headed, but maintained the sentiments of his father respecting the independence of America.

One of the chief excellencies of Pitt's speeches is the clearness of the arrangement. This appears to result from a comprehensive mind viewing the subject in all its parts and relations, and disposing them in such a way as, from that view, he perceives, will render them most effectual. In the former edition, and also in the Histo-

rical Magazine of June 1799, I delivered an opinion, that, in several points, Mr. Pitt considerably resembles Dr. Robertson. Like that eminent historian, he displays great powers of combination, of bringing together every circumstance and argument that can elucidate his plans or evince his propositions. He sets before us a subject in all its parts, dependencies, and relations. The comprehensive view which he takes, enables him to clear his ground as he goes along, and precludes every necessity of repetition. He makes his hearer and reader perfectly masters of his reasoning and its foundation. This constant and habitual exertion of a comprehensive mind produces clearness of arrangement, as it enables him to dispose every part of his orations in such a way, as he perceives will render them most effectual. Eloquence naturally calls forward more forcible reasoning than history, from minds equally strong; but it does not naturally produce more profound reflections: greater depth, therefore, must result from superior knowledge and superior powers. In the COMPASS AND

depth of his understanding, I think Mr. Pitt is doubtless superior to that great man to whom I have compared him above. Force of reasoning, however, he has in common with another extraordinary personage, Mr. Fox; profound observation and expanded views, with a still greater personage, Mr. Burke; but there is one point in which he excells these uncommon men; that is, the appropriate appositeness of his arguments to the question at issue. We have not only before us every thing that is requisite, but nothing that is not requisite. If we consider the speeches of these three great men, Pitt, Fox, and Burke, as we should do a proposition in Euclid, enunciating a certain theorem to be proved true or false, and estimate the arguments of each by their exclusive tendency to prove the proposition enunciated, we must certainly give the preference to Pitt. The closeness of Pitt has converged the rays of Fox's genius; whoever peruses his speeches during Lord North's Administration, and his speeches during Mr. Pitt's, will find that, excellent

as they were in the former period, they are still more excellent in the latter, having their amazing force more compacted and better directed. In the latter period we seldom find that vehement declamation, that profusion of invective, which frequently marked his speeches in the former. Indeed, when we compare Fox's speeches in the House of Commons with those he makes in mixed clubs, where he has every thing his own way, and nobody to oppose him, we perceive a very striking difference. In the one he assumes positions neither self-evident, proved, nor universally admitted to be true, and declaims upon them as if they were axioms; in the other he advances no proposition without either true or plausible grounds. The acuteness, indeed, of Pitt very readily perceives a flaw in an opponent's argument. His eloquence, as well as that of Burke and Fox, is original. We do not find that it so specially resembles that of any other orator, ancient or modern, as to give ground to believe that he has followed a model. While closely attentive to logical

precision, he has not neglected rhetorical art. His language is proper, elegant, and harmonious.

About the same time another member appeared on the side of Opposition, also displaying talents very superior to those of the majority of parliamentary speakers. Mr. Sheridan having earned and acquired a character by his comic poetry, surpassing that of any writer since the time of Congreve, came to display in the senate a genius that had procured him such applause on the theatre. Penetrating acuteness of discernment, fertility of invention, variety, abundance, and brilliancy of wit, force and justness of humour, Sheridan possesses above most men. His powers he directs with great dexterity, so as to give them all possible effect. He is an elegant classical scholar, and has an exquisite taste. His mind, however, is not enriched by knowledge equal to its capacity: hence his eloquence, though manifesting great ingenuity in occasional observation, seldom contains a

considerable quantity or variety of new information. That he can reason well, appears often in the strength and shrewdness of his remarks and inferences; but his speeches cannot be said to have argumentation for a leading characteristic. His arguments are singly forcible, rather than collectively chained. Sheridan is not peculiarly eminent for continuous reply, although his speeches, in opening a debate or discussing a question proposed by himself, be distinguished for ability, ingenuity, and eloquence. But, if his replies are defective, it requires no great penetration to see that the deficiency is owing to the want of particular knowledge, not of general powers. He has dealt more in sarcasm than any speaker in the house. Burke, indeed, could be as sarcastic as any man; but was not so often so as Sheridan. I remember, when Sheridan, Fox, and Burke were co-operators in politics, to have heard a gentleman give the following character of the severities which each of them occasionally employed, and Sheridan most frequently. ‘ The sar-

casms of Sheridan, mingled as they are with the strongest humour and adorned with the most brilliant wit, appear to result from natural or habitual acidity of temper; Burke's to arise either from particular irritation, political opposition, or moral censure; Fox never sour, seldom transported into rage, abounding in the milk of human kindness, was rarely severe, but from the opposition of party or the disapprobation of patriotism and virtue. Sheridan displays a very thorough knowledge of human nature, not indeed so much of the anatomy of mind, as of its active powers, and the springs that set them in motion. His writings do not only exhibit manners and the surface of life; but character, sentiment, and passion; with their causes and their operation. Men of genius, in imitative performances, as they advance in experience, knowing Nature better, copy from her more closely. In the plays of Fielding, written in the early part of his life, we meet with several fancy pictures; in his first novel, although there be a considerable de-

gree of imitation of real life, yet there is in it a good deal that has no archetype but in the author's imagination. Tom Jones is a complete copy of actual and usual existence. This has been the case with Sheridan in his first comedy : ingenious and able as it is, some of the principal characters either do not at all resemble any to be found in real life, or resemble them very slightly ; of the first sort is *Acres*, of the second is *Lydia Languish*. In the *School for Scandal* there is not a character, of which originals are not to be daily found in real life. This progression from fancy to actual existence is, in imitative performances, analogous to that in philosophical researches from abstraction to experience. The *Rivals* is the work of great genius, operating on somewhat scanty materials, collected partly only from observation, and therefore having recourse to fancy : the *School for Scandal* is the work of great genius, matured in the knowledge of that class of objects on which its exertions are employed, and taking real conduct for its archetype.

Sheridan first distinguished himself in Parliament by a speech concerning the employment of the military during the riots. Its object was to ascertain the circumstances in which it might be necessary to have recourse to the military power, and to inquire whether that necessity, in the case of the riots, was not owing to the negligence of the magistracy. Burke voted for his motions, but did not exert himself in their support. He probably thought that it was impossible to define, *a priori*, what should constitute such a necessity.

In a discussion concerning Indian affairs, Lord North proposed certain regulations of the commercial profits and territorial acquisitions of the East India Company, against which Burke made a very eloquent speech, intended to shew that the plan of the Minister was a violation of chartered rights; an attempt to rob the Company, in order to extend the influence of the Minister, by an addition of lavish and profligate corruption.

The detractors from Burke have endeavoured to prove, that his defence of chartered rights, on this and preceding questions concerning India affairs, and the proposed infringement of charters by the East India bill in 1783, were inconsistent with each other. That allegation I shall consider when I come to Mr. Fox's bills.

Towards the close of the session Burke made a motion concerning the extreme rigour that had been used to the inhabitants of St. Eustatius, after the capture of that island. He described their sufferings, and the rapacity of the conquerors, in the strongest colours; and took, as he usually did, a large and general view of the subject; investigating, from history and from the writings of the civilians, the right of conquerors to the effects of the conquered; and endeavouring to prove that the seizure of private property belonging to enemies, in such circumstances, was a violation of the law of nations. If by the law of nations is meant the custom of civilized states, in

their various relations, it does not appear that Burke made out his case. Besides, Admiral Rodney, the captor of St. Eustatius, was absent, and it would have been unjust to have instituted an inquiry into his conduct without giving him an opportunity of answering to the charges. The implicit admirers of Burke may impute the proposed prosecution of a victorious commander to humanity ; impartial examiners of his conduct will more readily attribute it to party spirit.

A motion was made, and introduced by the energetic eloquence of Fox, for the house to resolve itself into a committee, to consider of the American war. The motion was supported by the whole force of Opposition, a combination of talents of the highest rank, seldom united,—by Sheridan, by Dunning, by Pitt, by Burke, and by Fox. Each of these orators, all fit for being leaders of a political party, exerted his eloquence on the question. The motion was negatived ; and soon after the session closed.

When we consider the number of enemies with whom Britain had to cope, we might suppose that she would be compelled to act chiefly on the defensive. This, however, was not the case. Her offensive operations were vigorous, and in some cases successful. Admiral Kempenfelt, with an inferior force, defeated a French Fleet off Ushant. Admiral Parker fought the Dutch off the Dogger Bank, with little advantage to either side. In the West Indies, the British, after capturing St. Eustatius, had several actions with the French fleets; but without any signal advantages on either side. In America, the British were victorious by sea: by land several successful inroads were made into the provinces, and affairs for some time wore rather a favourable aspect; but received a fatal reverse in the capture of the brave Cornwallis, with the whole of the southern army. This event contributed, more than any that had yet happened, to produce an irresistible conviction in the minds of the British, that the subjugation of America was impracticable.

As mankind, in general judge more from **EVENTS** than from **PLANS**, the discomfiture of our forces produced great clamours against the Ministry; even from those who had before been most strenuous in recommending the coercion of America, and most sanguine in their expectation of success. The Opposition, from the arrival of the accounts, which came about the commencement of the Christmas holidays, proposed to proceed against the Ministry with a vigour now animated by a well grounded expectation of success. Many, who had professed themselves the friends of Lord North, either now really disapproving of his measures, or, what is as probable, foreseeing that he could not much longer continue in office, left him.

It was concerted, that the attack should be begun, immediately after the recess, by Mr. Fox, who was to make a motion for an investigation into the conduct of Lord Sandwich. Indisposition for some days prevented that orator from attending the house :

on which Burke said, ' no one laments Mr. Fox's illness more than I do ; and I declare, if he should continue ill, the inquiry into the conduct of the First Lord of the Admiralty should not be proceeded upon ; and even should the country suffer so serious a calamity as his death, it ought to be followed up earnestly and solemnly ; nay, of so much consequence is the inquiry to the public, that no bad use would be made of the skin of his departed friend, should such be his fate, if, like that of John Zisca, it should be converted into a drum, and used for the purpose of sounding an alarm to the people of England.'

February 7, 1782, Mr. Fox began his attack on the Ministry, by moving accusations against Lord Sandwich, under five several heads, which he summed up as the ground of a resolution declaratory of mismanagement in naval affairs. Burke supported the motion ; and though it was negatived, the majority was so small as to render it probable that Ministers could not much longer

stand their ground. February 22d, General Conway made a motion for addressing his Majesty to put an end to the American War. Burke supported this motion by all his powers of humour and of serious reasoning. It was lost by a majority of only one. February 27th, General Conway put the motion in a different form, and carried it by a majority of nineteen. The country gentlemen now joined Opposition. Lord John Cavendish made a motion, declaring that the house could no longer repose confidence in the Ministry, which was at first rejected by a small majority; but a few days after, a similar motion was made, on which Lord North rose, and declared that he was no longer Minister. A new Administration was formed, of which the Marquis of Rockingham was the nominal head and Mr. Fox the real. Burke was appointed Paymaster-General.

Thus have we seen Burke steadily and vigorously endeavouring, first, to prevent the contest with America; then to end the war, and to have its supporters deprived of

those offices in which they appear to him to follow counsels pernicious to his country. We have seen him display knowledge and wisdom equal to any which a statesman or senator ever exerted. We see the great philosopher, thoroughly acquainted with every particular and general truth, applying the most profound knowledge of the human mind and extensive views of particular and general history to the conduct of affairs. On every general question we see the sage; but on questions respecting particular men we frequently see the partizan. Burke, in whatever he engaged, engaged warmly. It is indeed difficult, if not impossible, for any man to associate with a set of men, whom he esteems and respects, without often adopting views and opinions merely as theirs. The longer one is connected with a party, the more implicitly does he embrace their notions, unless they should *go to a length, on either the one side or the other, to awaken his reflection,* and RECALL THE IMPARTIAL EXERCISE OF HIS JUDGMENT. Burke, in the progress of the opposition to the American war, became

almost a thorough party-man. We find him frequently supporting whatever motions any of the Opposition members made, with all the zeal that could have inspired him from conviction and mature reflection. He cherished the children of his adoption with as warm affection as if they had been begotten by himself. Besides the general influence of party sympathy operating on a mind of the most lively susceptibility, there were special circumstances in that party which rendered the influence of the sympathy still more powerful. No man can be more completely adapted for captivating the minds of those with whom he has frequent intercourse, than Mr. Fox. His manners are so open, frank, and engaging; his deportment is so unassuming; he bears his great qualities so meekly about him; he appears so little conscious of his immense superiority over ordinary men; he is so attentive to the gratification of his friends, and indeed to the diffusion of happiness, that he never fails to win the love of all with whom he converses. I do not mention this as a praise to Mr. Fox.

A power of commanding affection, and so influencing action, may be certainly advantageous to the possessor himself, and to those within the sphere of his influence: but it is advantageous to others, and its exertion meritorious to himself, according to its objects. The influence which Fox has obtained over many is or is not useful, according to its direction to their real welfare and happiness, or the contrary. However that may be, it is a certain fact, that those with whom he has been embarked have regarded him with an affection much beyond mere party politics. Those are, of all, the most attached to him, who, possessing great abilities themselves, can form the most adequate idea of his powers. Burke admired and loved Fox; and though possessing powers of discernment which even Fox himself did not exceed, became, as the American war advanced, as he grew more and more connected with Fox, a more and more implicit supporter of the measures which that statesman proposed, either for himself or as the mouth of a party.

A careful examiner of the parliamentary conduct of Burke will observe a very considerable difference between the speeches he made in supporting his own motions and those of others, between the children of his adoption and of his generation. Those of his adoption resembled the party; those of his generation RESEMBLED HIMSELF. His speeches, in attacking Sandwich, Palliser, Germaine, and North, were strongly tinged with the partizanship of Opposition. His speeches on American taxation, on reconciliation with America, on public economy, and such great questions as drew his powers out, were the speeches not of the party but of Edmund Burke; not of the advocate for a side in a judicial question, but of a wise and enlightened senator on momentous subjects of deliberation. Although Fox, in the vehemence of his invectives against Lord North, had repeatedly declared that he wished he might be reckoned the most infamous of mankind if ever he acted in an administration with him, and

even said he would be afraid to be left in the same room with him, (expressions which every liberal man will consider as the temporary ebullition of passion, not as a deliberate pledge of conduct) there was a great resemblance between these two leaders in several circumstances. Lord North was a man of most pleasing, amiable manners, and very desirous of serving his friends. Perhaps, indeed, few did more to promote the interest of those whom he considered as attached to him. From many, after his loss of power, he experienced ingratitude; yet not from all. Several men of great respectability continued to adhere to his cause when their interest would have directed them to the opposite course. As he had a heart himself disposed for kindness, he felt the kindness or unkindness, gratitude or ingratitude of others with keen sensibility. One day he happened to be dining with a gentleman of the law, who had been a very able supporter of his administration, and had been patronized by him, and had ever afterwards manifested the warmest gratitude and attach-

ment. After dinner, a little boy, named William, came up to his Lordship, got strawberries from him, and shewed great fondness for him. Afterwards, at tea, his Lordship proposing to renew their acquaintance, William turned his back upon him. 'Ah! William,' said Lord North, 'you are not the only one that paid court to me while I could give them strawberries, but turn their backs upon me when I have none to give them.'

Although, no doubt, Lord North's Administration was in many points objectionable; although his indulgence to his friends led him to too great profusion of donative, his own private integrity stands unimpeached. Fox and Burke, as the leaders of a party, might inveigh against his continuance in office; as patriots of extraordinary ability might censure some of his measures; but neither they, nor any one, ever accused him of applying the public money to his own use. As public men, they opposed his public conduct; as private, they

could not personally dislike a man whose open and amiable dispositions and manners resembled their own.

The first measure proposed by Fox as Minister, and supported by Burke, appears to have been somewhat precipitate:—an offer of peace to the Dutch, which they received very coldly.

Mr. Fox brought a message from the King, recommending the adoption of a plan for the retrenchment of expences. The object of this was to pave the way for the revival of Burke's reform bill, which, after several modifications, passed. Several popular propositions were made by the new Ministry or their adherents, and adopted. The resolution of 1769, respecting the Middlesex election, and against which Burke had displayed such eloquence, was expunged from the journals of the house. Such measures were proposed as tended to satisfy Ireland, by rendering the Parliament of that country independent of that of

Great Britain. The only party measure with which this Administration was chargeable was the appointment of Admiral Pigot to supersede Rodney, who had, on the famous 12th of April, gained a most celebrated naval victory. July 1, 1782, the Marquis of Rockingham died.

Burke wrote the following inscription for the mausoleum erected to the Marquis's memory in Wentworth Park, in which Lord Fitzwilliam has also placed a bust of the author.

• Charles, Marquis of Rockingham,—a statesman, in whom constancy, fidelity, sincerity, and directness, were the sole instruments of his policy. His virtues were his arts.

• A clear, sound, unadulterated sense, not perplexed with intricate design, or disturbed by ungoverned passion, gave consistency, dignity, and effect to all his measures. In Opposition, he respected the

principles of Government ; in Administration, he provided for the liberties of the people. He employed his moments of power in realizing every thing which he had proposed in a popular situation. This was the distinguishing mark of his conduct. After twenty-four years of service to the public, in a critical and trying time, he left no debt of just expectation unsatisfied.

‘ By his prudence and patience, he brought together a party, which it was the great object of his labours to render permanent, not as an instrument of ambition, but as a living depositary of principle.

‘ The virtues of his public and private life were not, in him, of different characters. It was the same feeling, benevolent, liberal mind, which, in the internal relations of life, conciliated the unfeigned love of those who see men as they are, which made him an inflexible patriot. He was devoted to the cause of liberty, not because he was haughty

and untractable, but because he was beneficent and humane.

‘ Let his successors, who from this house behold this monument, reflect that their conduct will make it their glory or their reproach. Let them be persuaded that similarity of manners, not proximity of blood, gives them an interest in this statue.

REMEMBER, RESEMBLE, PERSEVERE.’

I have already said that it was generally understood that the Marquis of Rockingham advanced to Mr. Burke ten thousand pounds, on a simple bond, never intended to be reclaimed.* Whatever the precise amount was, *that it never was intended to be reclaimed* has, since the publication of the first edition, been ascertained to the writer on the following grounds. On Saturday, June 30th, 1782, Mr. Counsellor Lee was sent for by express

* See page 166 of this edition.

to come to the Marquis of Rockingham, then on his death-bed. Having arrived, he was soon ushered into the sick room. On seeing him, his Lordship expressed much pleasure ; and desired they might be left alone. After a few words on some other subject, ‘ my dear Lee,’ said the Marquis, ‘ there is a piece of business I wish you to execute immediately, as there is no time to be lost. Various pecuniary transactions have passed between me and my admirable friend Edmund Burke. To the best of my recollection, I have given him up every bond or other document, and also added the fullest discharges ; but, lest my memory should have failed me, I, a dying man, but in the full use of my reason, desire you, as a professional man, will make out a codicil to my will, cancelling every paper that may be found containing any acknowledgement of a debt due to me from Edmund Burke. Mr. Lee drew up the codicil to the desired effect, and related the circumstance to a brother counsellor, who lately communicated the anecdote to the writer. With Earl

Fitzwilliam, the Marquis's heir, as is well known, Mr. Burke continued through life on terms of the most intimate friendship.

A circumstance, which happened about this time, exposed Burke to a good deal of detraction. Powel and Bembridge, formerly stewards to Lord Holland, when Paymaster-General, had been summoned by the House of Commons to account for a balance remaining in their hands. Their account appeared to most people a very lame one. Burke, however, undertook to vindicate their conduct and character. Some of his friends, particularly Colonel Barré, thinking very unfavourably of Powel and Bembridge, strenuously dissuaded Burke from interfering. He, however, was not convinced, and patronized them. As their defalcation soon became very evident, Burke's defence of them was imputed to the meanest motives. There is no evidence adduced, to prove that he vindicated them, on really knowing them to be guilty; but he is certainly chargeable with listening to wrong

information, or being guided by erroneous judgment; a charge which merely proves that he was not infallible.

It was understood by Burke, Fox, and their adherents, that the Duke of Portland was to succeed the Marquis of Rockingham. Lord Shelburne, however, found means to procure the appointment for himself, without consulting with the other members of Administration. Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke immediately resigned. Each, in a very able speech, assigned the motives of his resignation. Lord Shelburne was known to be against the independence of America. Burke and Fox considered it as a necessary preliminary to peace, because it could not be withheld, and the Americans would not treat unless it were previously acknowledged. Burke and Fox, who were both open, and above the petty artifice of court intrigue, were displeased with the mode of Shelburne's appointment, as it had been private, after they considered him as having agreed that the Duke of Portland should be in-

vested with the office, and that the plans of the Rockingham Administration should be pursued. Pitt, though offered a high appointment in the Rockingham Ministry, would not accept of it; and abstained from much connection with Fox and Burke. He had embraced the sentiments of his father respecting the independence of America; sentiments different from those of Burke and Fox. During the Rockingham Administration, Pitt made a motion for a reform in Parliament, which he supported by very ingenious arguments; arguments, however, the strength or weakness of which depends entirely on the circumstances of the times.

Pitt, when Lord Shelburne was made First Lord of the Treasury, was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer; an appointment to which the same objections could not be made as to that of Premier, Pitt being under no engagements to the late Administration.

Military operations were in a great degree suspended in America. Admiral Rodney

had gained a great victory in the West-Indies. In Europe, Gibraltar was the principal scene of war. There the courage, conduct, and genius of Elliot destroyed the works of the Spaniards, and so rendered the continuance of a siege impracticable; whilst the ability and skill of Lord Howe relieved the garrison from the evils of a blockade. In the East-Indies, though Britain had to contend with the French, the Dutch, and the national powers from the northern parts of the hither peninsula to the southern, yet was she victorious, through the abilities of Hastings.

During the winter a negotiation was opened between the belligerent powers, tired with a war wasteful to all parties; and, *as there was nothing in the system of either to prevent tranquillity*, a peace was concluded in January, 1783.

When the session opened, the terms of the peace were very severely arraigned by Opposition, now consisting of the friends of

Burke and Fox, and of Lord North, who had formed the famous coalition.

On the meeting of Parliament, Dec. 5th, 1782, Fox explained the grounds of his resignation and that of his colleagues. When in Administration, he had proposed 'to recognize the independence of the United States in the first instance, and not to reserve it as a condition of peace.' To this proposal Lord Shelburne had agreed, and had written an official letter to the Commander in Chief in America, to communicate the resolution to the United States. Fox then considered Shelburne as having pledged himself to agree to an unconditional acknowledgement of the independence of America. 'Judge, then,' said Fox, 'of my grief and astonishment, when, during the illness of my noble friend (the Marquis of Rockingham) another language was heard in the cabinet; and the noble Earl and his friends began to consider the above letter as containing offers only of a conditional nature, to be recalled, if not accepted as the price of peace. Finding myself thus ensnared and betrayed, and all

confidence destroyed, I quitted a situation in which I found I could not remain either with honour or safety.' Burke declared himself actuated by the same motives, and determined by the same reasons as Mr. Fox, to retire from the Ministry. He made a very able and brilliant speech, full of wit, satire, and argument, 'against the Prime Minister; contending that his conduct had been a composition of hypocrisy and absurdity. Although many might blame Burke and Fox for withdrawing their powers from Administration, merely because they had been thwarted in some measures, and in one appointment, when the country so much wanted the services of its greatest men, yet no one can charge them with artifice or duplicity; what they did, they did boldly and avowedly.

However much several members disapproved of certain parts of the King's speech, considering unanimity as necessary at so critical a juncture, no one proposed an amendment. When the conclusion of peace

was announced to Parliament, the terms on which it had been made excited great disapprobation, both from Burke, Fox, and their friends; and from Lord North and his friends. Pitt, with the assistance of hardly any very able man but Dundas, had, in the House of Commons, to cope with the combined strength of the North and Fox parties. The Ministerial speakers defended the peace as the best that could be attained in the circumstances of the country. The coalesced opponents maintained that our resources were still in a flourishing state, and that the army and navy were in the best condition, and could easily stand the brunt of another campaign. This favourable view of our situation was certainly much more consistently exhibited by Lord North, Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Adam, and Lord Mulgrave, who had uniformly maintained that our army and navy were in a vigorous state, than by Burke, Fox, and Sheridan, who had as uniformly maintained that they were in an exhausted state during many years, when the national finances had certainly not been so much drained, nor so many of its

troops consumed as at that time. Burke and Fox could not justly alledge that the state of our finances and forces was much meliorated during their short Administration. They had repeatedly asserted that peace on any terms was adviseable to Britain, when in a much less exhausted situation. They had offered peace to Holland; they had proposed unconditionally to recognize the independence of America; they had shewn themselves anxious to attain what they so often said was necessary to the salvation of Britain on any terms. Their disapprobation, therefore, of peace we may, without any deviation from candour, conclude to have arisen fully as much from party opposition as from a conviction of its expediency.

The ministerial speakers, after defending the main object, attacked the coalition. They contended, that an union between men of so heterogeneous principles as those which Burke and Fox, on the one hand, and Lord North, on the other, had always professed

to entertain, must be from some different reason than mutual agreement of political idea. The combined parties procured a majority in the house, and passed a vote of censure on the Ministry. The coalition was bitterly inveighed against both in and out of Parliament. Though prevalent in both houses, it was on the whole unpopular. To arraign an union of men once opposite or even inimical to each other, without considering the *object of the combination, or the conduct of its members in their combined capacity*, would be the result of prejudice, not of judgment. A change of circumstances often renders it just to deviate from that plan of political conduct which it was once right to pursue, and to act with those men whom it was once right to oppose. The abuse thrown out against Burke and the other coalesced leaders, merely because they had coalesced, after much mutual obloquy, was the abuse of ignorant declaimers, not of impartial, informed, and able reasoners. Very able, well informed reasoners, no doubt, did very severely blame the coalition ;

but that blame must have proceeded from either a discovery of their object, or an anticipation of their conduct, and not from the mere fact of their union.

The coalition is now known to have first been projected by Mr. Burke.* There was less inconsistency in that gentleman and his friends, the Duke of Portland and Earl Fitzwilliam, coalescing with Lord North, than in Mr. Fox. Though the other leaders of the Rockingham party disagreed with Lord North on the subject of the American war, they entertained a very high opinion of his talents and integrity. Mr. Burke, in particular, as we have seen, declared him to be one of the ablest and best men he ever knew; and Lord North entertained a still higher opinion of Mr. Burke. Between men so affected to each other, previous dif-

* Soon after the separation of Burke and Fox, their joint and several measures underwent a discussion at the Duke of Portland's, and it was ascertained that the coalition originated with Burke. I did not know that fact when I wrote the first edition.

ference of opinion did not preclude co-operation, if the end and means were justifiable. The case was different as to Mr. Fox. His own strong and often repeated asseverations concerning the incapacity, corruption, and even capital criminality of Lord North, attached peculiar inconsistency to his joining him as a Minister.*

In consequence of the vote of censure, the Ministers resigned their employments. A new Ministry was appointed, composed of Burke, Fox, the Duke of Portland, and their friends ; Lord North, Lord Loughborough, and their friends. Burke had his former employment of Paymaster-General, an employment he accepted for the sake of reform. The business of the greatest importance, which occupied the attention of Parliament during the remainder of this session, was the opening a commercial intercourse with North America, by repealing, in the first place, the prohibitory acts which had passed

* See the Life of Fox in the Historical Magazine.

during the contest ; and, in the second, preparing such new regulations as the acknowledgement of American independence rendered necessary. In the new relation in which America now stood, many new modifications were requisite for the purposes of commercial intercourse. A temporary act was passed, investing his Majesty with certain powers for the better carrying on trade and commerce between his Majesty's dominions and the United States. This act was to operate only a limited time, until that branch of commerce should be settled by both parties on a more permanent footing. East India affairs also were the subject of investigation at this time. No law, however, was grounded on the information procured by the committee during this session.

The more complicated and numerous engagements of public business prevented Burke from being so frequently in company with his friend Johnson, as before he had plunged so deeply in politics. Whether,

on the whole, the great mind of Burke might not have been exerted with as much or more advantage to mankind in the calm pursuits of literature and philosophy, may be questioned. It is certain that every man of extraordinary intellectual powers is not, in proportion to his talents, fitted for conducting political affairs. Hume, speaking of the literary efforts of one of the greatest men the world ever saw, Bacon, after his dismissal from public business, says, ‘ that great philosopher at last acknowledged with regret, that he had too long neglected the true ambition of a fine genius ; and, by plunging into business and affairs, which require much less capacity, but greater firmness of mind, than the pursuits of learning, had exposed himself to such grievous calamities.’ Burke was evidently deficient in that command of temper which is indispensably necessary to the management of important business. We see that those of his efforts, which have had the greatest influence on mankind, have been literary more

than political. Many of the greatest admirers of his genius have lamented that it should be devoted to faction ; that those talents, which could instruct, delight, and illuminate his own and every future age, should have been so often employed in pursuing objects which very inferior talents could pursue with equal effect ; that a mind of compass and energy equal to any of the age should be wasted in making or supporting motions about the attacking this or that Minister, screening this or that opponent of Ministry. On questions which required nothing more than plain common understanding and obvious inference from testimony, he would often soar to the highest sublimities, which would have made an eminent figure in poetry. With a genius for comprehending every subject of human knowledge, he was often the follower of mere party politics. His literary friends regretted his devotion to politics. Goldsmith has hit off Burke's character, including the prolixity into which the exuberance of his genius and fulness of his

mind often transported him, in the following lines :

‘ Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such,
 We scarcely can *praise* it or *blame* it too much ;
 Who, born for the universe, narrow’d his mind,
 And to party gave up what was meant for mankind :
 Tho’ fraught with all learning, kept straining his throat,
 To persuade Tommy Townshend to lend him a vote ;
 Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
 And thought of convincing while they thought of dining :
 Tho’ equal to all things, for all things unfit,
 Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit ;
 For a patriot too cool, for a drudge disobedient,
 And too fond of the right to pursue the expedient.
 In fine, ’twas his fate, unemploy’d or in pay, Sir,
 To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor !’

Had Dr. Johnson, from his early youth, devoted himself to parliamentary efforts, it is by no means probable that he would have done as much good to society as by his Dictionary, Idler, Rambler, Preface to Shakspeare, and Lives of the Poets. Of the members of the literary club, Sir Joshua Reynolds had the greatest intercourse both with Burke and with Fox. Johnson frequently observed, that Sir Joshua adopted

the opinions of these great men too implicitly. ‘ Reynolds,’ said he to Boswell, ‘ is too much under the influence of the Fox-star and Irish constellation.’ ‘ There is,’ replied Boswell, ‘ no Fox-star ; but, Sir, there is a dog-star.’ Johnson here must have meant a play of words, as he had the very highest opinion of the abilities of Fox. Johnson, about this time, in order to ascertain whether his mental powers were impaired, determined to try to learn a new language, and fixed upon the Low Dutch. Finding he learned it with facility, he desisted, thinking the experiment had been sufficiently tried. Burke’s ready discernment perceived, instantaneously, that it was not a fair trial, as the Low Dutch is a language so near our own ; had it been one of the languages entirely different, he might, he said, be soon satisfied. Dining one day at Sir Joshua’s, Johnson repeated his gradation of liquors—claret for boys, port for men, brandy for heroes. ‘ Then,’ said Burke, ‘ let me have claret : I love to be a boy, and to have the careless gaiety of

boyish days.' Though Burke relished a cheerful glass, he did not exceed; and did not prefer strong wine. As the Ministry had been active in procuring a separate establishment for the Prince, the leading men of them were frequently with his Royal Highness. One day, after dinner, the Prince, about to propose a bumper toast, asked Burke, if a toast-master was not absolute? He instantly answered, 'yes, Sir, JURE DE VINO.' 'That is the only way,' replied his Royal Highness, 'in which I should wish to be absolute.'

Burke, in speaking of any person, could very happily assume his style. A gentleman in company observing, that the language of Young resembled that of Johnson, Burke replied, 'it may have the appearance, but has not the reality; it possesses the nodosities of the oak, without its strength.'

Burke for some time had been devoting his attention to the affairs of India, to the commerce, territorial possessions, and ge-

neral state of the Company's affairs, and also to the conduct of their servants in India. He had maintained a constant correspondence with his valued friend, Mr. Francis, who had, with the most benevolent intentions, employed his penetrating and vigorous mind in enquiring into the actual state of Indostan, and its causes, either in intrinsic circumstances, or the conduct of the Company's servants, in order to devise plans for at once meliorating the condition of the natives, and promoting the prosperity of British India.

Mr. Francis, after having been several years in India, had made himself so much master of the situation of the Zemindars, or landholders of that country, that he wrote a paper on the subject, which, both as a statement and a dissertation, does very high honour to his talents, for both research and philosophy. A copy of this paper was sent by the author to Mr. John Burke, and by him communicated to Edmund, whose answer contains the opinion he always held

respecting property, concerning India landholders, as far as he then knew their securities and condition, and respecting European affairs.

MY DEAR SON,

Beaconsfield, Wednesday, Nov. 1777.

‘ I give you a thousand thanks for the papers you have been so good as to put into my hands. I wished to keep them a little longer, but I husbanded my time as well as I could, and, when my company went to bed, spent the greatest part of the night in reading them. This morning I went through the whole. I don’t know that I ever read any state paper drawn with more ability, and, indeed, I have seldom read a paper of any kind with more pleasure.

‘ In general, I perfectly agree with Mr. Francis, that a nice scrutiny into the property and tenures of an whole nation is almost always more alarming to the people than advantageous to Government. It is never undertaken without some suspicion at least of an attempt to impose some new

burthen upon them. Mr. Francis is a better judge than I can possibly be of the politics which have given rise to such a measure. Upon that subject, therefore, I can form no opinion but what I take from his authority. The idea of forcing every thing to an artificial equality, has something at first view very captivating in it. It has all the appearance imaginable of justice and good order ; and very many persons, without any sort of partial purposes, have been led to adopt such schemes, and pursue them with great earnestness and warmth. Though I have no doubt that the minute, laborious, and very expensive *cadastre* which was made by the late King of Sardinia has done no sort of good ; and that, after all his pains, a few years will restore all things to their first inequality ; yet it has been the admiration of all the reforming financiers of Europe ; I mean the official financiers as well as the speculative. You know that it is this very rage for equality which has blown up the flames of this present cursed war in America. I am, for one, entirely satisfied

that the inequality which grows out of the nature of things by time, custom, succession, accumulation, permutation, and improvement of property, is much nearer that true equality, which is the foundation of equity and just policy, than any thing that can be contrived by the tricks and devices of human skill. What does it amount to but that, after some little jumbling, some men have better estates than others. I am certain, that when the financial system is but tolerably planned, it will catch property in spite of all its doublings, and sooner or later those who have most will pay most; and this is the effective equality, which circumstances will bring about of themselves, if they are left to their own operation.

‘ This paper of Mr. Francis has given me one idea, which, I confess, I had not before (indeed it has given me several), and it is an idea which affords me satisfaction. I find that Mr. Francis thinks that the occupier of the soil, and not the Government, is the true proprietor of the land in Bengal. I

did not understand before, that a sort of custom had given them a preference ; but that on the whole Zemindars did not stand on so good a footing as our copyholders in England, or even as the holders of church-leases. Their custom of annual letting seemed much to favour this notion. I am glad to find I was mistaken ; for, whatever the practice may be, I am sure that every thing which favours the stability of property is right, and does much for the peace, order, and civilization of any country.

‘ I write with little consideration, and less knowledge of the subject. We make an hundred blunders in a matter so very remote from our situation, and our local circumstances and customs. But if I guess rashly in such things, I do not persevere obstinately in my errors. I am afraid that Mr. Francis begins, by his distance, to make very nearly as mistaken judgments on our affairs here, as we do on his in India. He thinks, alas ! that Parliament troubles itself with these matters. We were, indeed, busy enough

about them until the East India Company was put into the hands of the Court. Since that time, a most religious silence is kept about those affairs. Government is sure to throw them immediately out, if any one's forward zeal prompts him to bring them before us. Nothing but the approaching expiration of the agreement with the public can submit it again to our instrumental consideration. Something will then be done. If more can be done for confirming the power of the Crown over the Company, as to its exterior form, like other forms, it will, I fancy, be suffered to continue.

‘ When you write to Mr. Francis, pray put him in mind of me, and thank him for his permission to you to communicate his very valuable paper, of which I neither have made, nor shall make any improper or indiscreet use. I have written to him a letter, which I hope will not be wholly useless, about the first object of my heart, our friend William Burke. You are happy that you have our friend S—— under the immediate

protection of one who knows so well what power owes to friendship. Adieu, my dear John, my hand is tired ; but it is, with my heart, always yours.

EDMUND BURKE.

The perusal of Mr. Francis's Memorial led Mr. Burke's mind, which had been for some years employed in attending to Indian affairs in general, into accurate and extensive inquiries concerning that specific part of the condition of the Zemindars.* When Mr. Francis returned in 1781, he was enabled to make himself master of the subject ; besides being very greatly assisted in the attainment of knowledge upon other questions concerning India. It is not doubted that the information and views which Mr. Burke had derived from Mr. Francis, and other

* Mr. Francis, in a letter from Bengal to Lord North, afterwards published by Debrett, presents us with a very masterly account of the Zemindars, and other ranks and classes of natives; and also a clear and striking view of the political interests both of India and the Company.

sources, were powerfully instrumental in supplying Fox with the materials from which he formed his bill; a bill, to the passing of which neither Burke nor Fox anticipated any powerful obstruction. The Ministry had certainly many symptoms of strength superior to that possessed by any Ministry since the commencement of this reign. It combined the leading members of both parties during the American war. It united philosophy and genius with official experience. To consolidate parts, formerly heterogeneous, into one mass, a great weight of aristocratic influence was superinduced. Lord North retained many of his numerous supporters. Fox had a less numerous, but more able band of friends. The result of this union of genius, experience, rank, and property, was a majority seldom seen in favour of the Minister from the time of the illustrious Pitt. It was more likely to continue, because not depending solely on the native genius of the Minister, it had so many strong adventitious supports. Strong, however, as the building appeared,

there was a latent flaw. The Administration had been evidently forced upon the Sovereign, and was suspected by many, and known by some, to be disagreeable to that personage and his courtiers. The people also regarded the coalition with a jealous eye. The party which the coalition had driven from power, it might well be supposed, would narrowly watch every opportunity which either the favour of the Sovereign, or the people, might improve to them. The India bill of Mr. Fox afforded them the opportunity they wished.

The session met on the 11th day of November. The speech and address were received in the House of Lords, without any censure, except from Earl Temple alone; and in the House of Commons with unanimity and applause.

Nov. 18, Fox introduced, with a speech that few ever equalled, and even he himself never surpassed, his famous India bill. To enter into a detail of a measure so well

known, would be unnecessary, and, indeed, foreign to my purpose. It may not, however, be irrelative to repeat its leading objects and features, as Burke was its most strenuous supporter. The system proposed by Fox characterised his ardent daring spirit, his comprehensive, expanded, and inventive genius. Whether in its tendency and principles a good or a bad measure, it was undoubtedly at once open, decisive, and efficient. He either assumed or concluded that the East India Company had so completely mismanaged their affairs as to be in a state of insolvency, and that their servants had been guilty of the most atrocious oppression in India. On this hypothesis or conviction he formed his plan. To prevent the continuance of mismanagement by the East-India Company, he proposed what would have been certainly very effectual as to that object, the taking the management of their own affairs, territorial and commercial, entirely out of the hands of the Proprietors and the Directors; their house in Leadenhall-street, together with all books,

papers, and documents: vesting the entire management, the appointment of all officers and servants, the rights of peace and war, and the disposal of the whole revenue, in the hands of certain Commissioners, to be appointed, in the first instance, by the whole Legislature, and afterwards by the Crown. It was proposed they should hold their offices by the same tenure as the judges of England, and thus not be dependent on the Minister of the time. The proposed Commissioners were eight of the particular friends of Mr. Fox. For preventing oppressive and despotical proceedings in the administration of the territorial possessions; a second bill was added, ascertaining precisely the powers of the Governor-General, supreme council, and other officers which the Commissioners might appoint; and also the privileges of the Zemindars (landholders) and other natives.*

* This bill was approved of by many who reprobated the principal bill. In forming the second plan, the communications of Mr. Francis had been peculiarly useful and important.

Mr. Pitt took a vigorous and decided part in opposing this bill. From him indeed and Dundas did it meet with almost the sole opposition it experienced in its passage through the House of Commons. Pitt attacked it in the first place as an infringement, or rather annihilation of the Company's charter ; insisting that the charter was as clear and strong, and the right founded on it as well ascertained, as that of any chartered body in the kingdom ; that the violation of the India Company's rights, glaringly unjust in itself, militated against the security of all chartered rights. He argued, that besides its injustice respecting the Company, it would be dangerous to the constitution, by establishing an influence independent of the Legislature ; an influence that, from its nature, would be under the controul of its creator, Mr. Fox. He did not hesitate to impute so unjust and so unconstitutional a plan to an ambitious desire of being perpetual dictator. Dundas coinciding with Pitt's idea, that the system was unjust and unconstitutional, and concurring

in his assignation of motives, entered into a detailed discussion of Fox's statement of the finances of the Company; insisting that their affairs were by no means in that desperate state which Fox alledged. The Proprietors and Directors of the East India Company petitioned the house not to pass a bill, operating as the confiscation of their property and annihilation of their charters, without proving specific delinquency that might merit the forfeiture of their privileges and property; asserting, that proved delinquency alone could justify such a bill, and desiring the charges and proofs might be brought forward. The people, in general, were strongly impressed by the arguments of the opposers of the bill, and the representation of those whose rights and property it appeared to affect. Burke made, at the second reading, a speech equal for eloquence to any he had ever produced; whether, however, in the accuracy of his information, in the justness of his conclusions, in the truth of what he advanced, and the wisdom of what he proposed, he

equalled his own efforts on other occasions, was not then so evident.

Burke admitted, to the fullest extent, that the charter of the East India Company had been sanctioned by the King and Parliament; that the Company had bought it, and honestly paid for it; and that they had every right to it, which such a sanction and such a purchase could convey. Having granted this to the opponents of the bill, he maintained, that, notwithstanding that sanction and purchase, the proposed change ought to take place. He proceeded on the great and broad grounds of ethics, arguing that no special covenant, however sanctioned, can authorize a violation of the laws of morality; that if a covenant operates to the misery of mankind, to oppression and injustice, the general obligation to prevent wickedness is antecedent and superior to any special obligation to perform a covenant; that Parliament had sold all they had a right to sell; they had sold an exclusive privilege to trade, but not a privilege to rob and oppress; and

that if what they sold for the purposes of commerce was made the instrument of oppression and pillage, it was their duty, as the guardians of the conduct and happiness of all within the sphere of their influence and controul, to prevent so pernicious an operation. After laying down this as a fundamental principle, he proceeded to argue that there had been, and were, the most flagrant acts of oppression in India by the servants of the Company ; that the whole system was oppressive from the beginning of the acquisition of territorial possession. He entered into a detail of the principal instances of pillage, rapine, violence, and despotism, attributed to the English, and dwelt with great energy and pathos on those acts of which he alledged Mr. Hastings to be guilty.

On this subject he brought forward the principal heads of what afterwards occupied so much of his attention in the prosecution of the Governor-General. His imagination, warming as he went along, figured to him,

that the only monuments by which the proceedings of the British were distinguished, were waste and desolation. Other conquerors, he said, of every description, had left some monument either of state or beneficence behind them. ' If their passion or their avarice drove the Tartar hordes to acts of rapacity or tyranny, there had been time enough in the short life of man to repair the desolations of war by the acts of munificence and peace. But under the English government all this order was reversed. Our conquest there, after twenty years, was as crude as it had been the first day. The natives scarce knew what it was to see the grey head of an Englishman. Young men (almost boys) governed there, without society and without sympathy with the natives. They had no more social habits with the people than if they still resided in England; nor indeed any species of intercourse, but that which was necessary to the making a sudden fortune with a view to a remote settlement. Animated with all the avarice of age, and all the impetuosity of youth, they rolled in one

after another, wave after wave, and there was nothing before the eyes of the natives but an endless, hopeless prospect of new flights of birds of prey and passage, with appetites continually renewing for a food that was continually wasting. Were we to be driven out of India this day, nothing would remain to tell that it had been possessed, during the inglorious period of our dominion, by any thing better than the ouran-outang, or the tyger.' The peroration was an eulogium on his friend Fox as the mover of the bill. After a very animated general panegyric, he entered on the praises of the bill, anticipating the fervent and adoring gratitude with which he and the supporters of it would be regarded in India. He said, ' There was not a tongue, a nation, a religion in India, which would not bless the presiding care and manly beneficence of that house and of him who proposed to them this great work. Their names would never be separated before the throne of the Divine Goodness, in whatever language or with

whatever rites pardon was asked for sin, and reward for those who imitated the God-head in his universal bounty to his creatures.

The bill passed the House of Commons by a very great majority. When it came to the Peers, it met, if not with an abler opposition, with a much more numerous, in proportion to the number of the assembly; and talents (with the exception of Lord Thurlow) were chiefly on the side of Ministry. The acute and comprehensive genius of Pitt, with the sound sense and extensive knowledge of India affairs possessed by Dundas, had exhausted the arguments that could militate against the bill. Even Thurlow brought forward little new matter on the general merits of the bill, but confined himself chiefly to the attack on Hastings. 'If (said he) Hastings be a depopulator of provinces, and an enemy to the human race, let his crimes be brought forward.' The close habits of judicial investigation of that great

man represented investive, however eloquent, against an individual as mere inanity, unless supported by proof.

Though defended by the Duke of Portland, Lords Stormont, Carlisle, Sandwich, and Loughborough, with all the force of their respective talents, it was thrown out in the House of Peers. Whether the more decisive opposition that it met with in that house was owing to the Lords, from having had more time to consider its principles and effects, being convinced that it was an unjust and dangerous measure, or to some extrinsic cause, I cannot take upon me to determine. It is certain, that of the Peers (with the exception of the Duke of Richmond, Lords Thurlow and Camden, and a few more) those who were most zealous in opposing it, were not those whose talents and habits of discussion rendered them the most competent judges of great political regulations. It was understood in the House of Commons that it had been represented by authority to many Peers, that those would not be con-

sidered as the friends of the Sovereign who voted for the bill. Resolutions of great boldness and decision were adopted, after much debate, by the house, declaring that it was derogatory to the honour of the Crown, and subversive of the Constitution of the country, to report any opinion or alledged opinion of the King on any proceeding pending in Parliament, so as to influence the votes of the members. The King determined on an entire change of Administration. The principal members were immediately dismissed from office, and a very general resignation of employments took place. Pitt was appointed Prime Minister. The majority, however, continued in favour of Opposition in the House of Commons. A series of motions was proposed and adopted, tending to prove that the Minister ought not to continue in office without the support of the House of Commons. That no one could be long Minister if thwarted by the House of Commons, is obvious; at the same time, neither law nor precedent was brought forward to prove *that the continuance of a Minister in office*

contrary to the approbation of the House of Commons was unconstitutional. The King certainly, as chief executive magistrate, has a right to chuse his own Ministers, (unless under disqualifications ascertained by law) for performing any branch of the executive duties. The House of Commons have a right to impeach, on the ground of malversation in office, any of the Ministers, but not to prescribe to him in his choice of a Minister. Notwithstanding the remonstrances of the House of Commons Pitt continued in office. Although the majority was against him in the house, it was very evident that it was for him in the nation. His Majesty seeing that the opinion of the House of Commons continued contrary to his own, and conceiving it to be contrary to that of his people, determined to put it in the power of the people to manifest their approbation or disapprobation of their present representatives. By dissolving Parliament, he *virtually asked this question*, 'DID YOUR LATE REPRESENTATIVES SPEAK YOUR SENSE OR NOT?' If they did, you will re-elect them ; if not, you will elect

others. Being asked this question respecting their late representatives, the greater part of the people answered 'no.' A very considerable majority of members friendly to Pitt was returned.

The new Parliament met the 18th of May, 1754. The first business which exercised the talents of Burke was a motion for preventing a scrutiny into the election of his friend Fox, at the instance of Sir Cecil Wray. Fox, on this occasion, displayed a minute, accurate, and profound knowledge of law, which astonished the most eminent professional men on both sides. This motion was negatived, and the scrutiny proceeded.

June 14th, Burke made a motion for a representation to the King, the general object of which was to vindicate the conduct of Opposition, and to censure that of Administration. It dwelt particularly on the rectitude and expediency of the late East-India bill, and on the dreadful consequences it affirmed likely to ensue from the dissolution

of Parliament. Although Burke's speech on this occasion contained very great ingenuity, yet the main arguments were necessarily a repetition of what had been frequently urged before. The motion was negatived without a division.

Several bills were proposed by Pitt respecting India affairs, preparatory to his great plan for managing India. His bill was nearly the same as that which had been rejected by the preceding Parliament. Its principal opponents were Mr. Francis, Mr. Eden, and Fox. Burke did not enter much into its merits. It proceeded on a principle different from that of Fox,—that the affairs of the Company were not in a desperate state; that the Company were fully competent to the management of their *commercial* concerns. It proposed that the dominion of the territorial possessions should be placed under the controul of the Executive Government; and that a Board should be instituted for this purpose, to consist of the Ministers

for the time being. He considered this plan as the most efficient for the prevention of the oppression of the Company's servants in India, and for the preservation and improvement of our political interests in that country; and that, on the whole, it would remedy the evil, without the confiscation of property, or the disfranchisement of a great corporate body. Fox represented it as a half measure, and inefficient as to its professed object, and that it increased to an enormous degree the influence of the Crown; that the Commissioners proposed by his bill could only be removed upon an address from Parliament; that his plan was open and responsible; that the Board of Controul, by Pitt's bill, depended entirely on the Crown, and that any or all of its members might be removed, if they should contradict the mandates of the advisers of the Crown; that the negative of the Board of Controul to those appointments, left nominally to the Directors, made that Board really the Directors. Fox affirmed that openness marked every

part of his own bill, but that Pitt's was a dark delusive scheme to take away by saps the claims of the Company.

A very common observation concerning the East India bill of Mr. Pitt is, that it did circuitously what Mr. Fox's bill proposed to do directly. They must be very superficial reasoners who do not see the following material difference. The nominees projected by Mr. Fox would have possessed an influence that would have secured him and his friends in power, even though the confidence of the King and country should be withdrawn: the plan of Mr. Pitt would not give either to him or his friends an influence which would have secured him in power, if the confidence of the King or country were withdrawn. By Mr. Fox's plan there might be a Minister who held his place by a new and unconstitutional tenure: Mr. Pitt's did not admit the possibility of such a tenure. The appointments by Mr. Pitt's bill were to be held during pleasure, agreeably

to the general analogy of executorial offices under the Crown: the appointments, according to Mr. Fox's bill, were to be held contrary to that general analogy, and to both the theory and practice of the Constitution. By Mr. Pitt's bill the political direction was to be vested in those whose offices in the State implied the admission of their political capacity: by Mr. Fox's, both political and commercial details, principles, and operations, were to be submitted to individuals not holding offices that implied the admission of their political capacity, and not known for education or habits that would have fitted them for superintending mercantile transactions. I am far from wishing to assert any thing disrespectful to any of the individuals; I merely state a fact, that the gentlemen he proposed for managing the affairs of merchants were not known to be experienced in trade; that those in whom he wished to be vested the management of the pecuniary concerns of persons whom he asserted to be insolvent, were not known as accountants.

During the Parliament which was now commenced, the uncommon genius and eloquence of Burke were treated by many in the house with a disrespect which they never before experienced. It must be confessed, that the richness of his mind very often diffused itself into too great prolixity. Beautiful, sublime, and pathetic, as many of his luxuriant expatiations were, they did not always tend to promote the business at issue. Were Homér to recite his grandest descriptions, his most pathetic episodes, or most exact characteristics of human nature, to an assembly of men engaged on special business, that recital might be very probably considered as an interruption to their own affairs. It might also happen, that there might be in such an assembly of men, fully competent to the details of business, many who might have neither taste to relish, nor understanding to comprehend such excellencies. In such a situation, a man of the greatest genius might naturally expect to meet with checks. Burke, besides, was very irritable, and often hurried by passion

into most violent expressions. His prolixity and irritability gave occasion to treatment of which his powerful genius might, perhaps, be in some degree the cause. While he spoke, several members made a point of coughing, beating the ground with their feet, and even hooting. Frolick, perhaps, might have its share in this mode of opposition, as a great part of the most active senators in that way were of an age when allowance may be made for sport and frolick; and others might claim some of the allowance to juvenile age, although, as to date, their youthful years were long passed. Coughing and hooting were also very convenient in other respects. The lungs and feet were forthcoming for noise, when drafts upon the brain for argument might not be so easily answered. The former were duly honoured; the latter might be returned with the answer of *no effects*. The dignity of conscious superiority ought to have rendered Burke indifferent to such disturbance. He might have contented himself with reflecting that their hoots and coughs could

not render them in any degree equal to him: the croaking of the frogs ought not to have discomposed the lion. Instead of that, he frequently fell into the most outrageous fits of passion. He once told them that he could discipline a pack of hounds to yelp with much more melody, and equal comprehension.

In the beginning of July, he made a speech on the enormities he ascribed to Hastings. In the picture he drew, he displayed powers which might have composed a most admirable tragedy. The sufferings he figured to himself, and the avarice and cruelty which his fancy drew as causing them, contained an equal degree of interest and passion with any exhibited on the stage. He brought forward a string of motions, as the foundation of an inquiry into the conduct of Mr. Hastings. Pitt very briefly opposed this, because there were not proofs of the fact, on the supposition of which Burke grounded his inquiry. It does

not appear that *at that time* there really was that undoubted evidence of delinquency, which only could support the propriety of the motions. Burke's fancy and passions getting much warmer from opposition, pictured to him Hastings as the greatest monster that had ever existed. Persisting in pressing the subject, he was at length overpowered by a loud and continual clamour.

Burke did not enter much on Pitt's bill for the prevention of smuggling, and the commutation act. On the commutation act Mr. Courtenay very much distinguished himself, not only by his humour, but by his information and reasoning.

In the last measure of the session, framed by the able and liberal mind of Dundas, most of the members were of one mind:—the restoration of the forfeited estates. Burke appears to have been so much occupied by inquiries into the conduct of Hastings, that he, during the latter part of that

session, seldom spoke, and never for any length of time. The session closed the 20th of August.

Whilst the transactions of the Governor-General were engaging the thoughts of Burke as a public man, a circumstance took place that much moved his feelings as a private. Dr. Johnson, after recovering from an alarming shock, was now in a state of health which, together with his age, appeared to predict a speedy dissolution. Burke went frequently to see his venerable friend, now confined to the bed of sickness. One day, he, along with his friend Mr. Windham, and several other gentlemen, was visiting the dying sage. Burke said, 'I am afraid, my dear Sir, such a number of us may be oppressive to you?'—'No, Sir,' said Johnson, 'it is not so; and I must be in a wretched state, indeed, when your company would not be a delight to me.' Mr. Burke, in a tremulous voice, expressive of being very tenderly affected, replied, 'my dear Sir, you have always been too good to

me.' He immediately afterwards went away. This was the last circumstance in the acquaintance of these two eminent men.

The lofty spirit of Johnson, unbroken by old age and complicated disease, Burke venerated, as he had admired his intellectual force and exertions. He suggested to Boswell, as applicable to Johnson, what Cicero in his *Cato Major* says of *Appius*:—
'Intentum enim animum quasi arcum habebat, nec languescens succumbebat senectuti:' repeating, at the same time, the following noble words in the same passages:—*'Ita enim senectus honesta est si se ipsa defendit, si jus suum retinet, si nemini emancipata est, si usque ad extremum vite vindicat jus suum.'*

Perhaps literary history does not afford a more striking instance of extraordinary talents more happily and beneficially exerted than in the mind of Samuel Johnson. An understanding, acute, poignant, forcible, and profound; an imagination, rich, strong, and

brilliant; a most retentive memory, stored with knowledge; were uniformly directed to promote the cause of wisdom, virtue, and religion. 'His Essays,' to use the words of his able biographer,* 'form a body of ethics.' In the usual progression of great minds, he became, as he advanced in years and knowledge, more practical. His Rambler shewed more of man in his general nature, as he himself says of Dryden: his Idler, as he says of Pope, more of man in his local manners. His Rambler was the work of a profound, comprehensive philosopher: his Idler, of a man of genius, experienced in life. The former describes men as they always are; the latter as they were then in England. As a critic, the world, since the time of Aristotle, has seen few, if any, equal to Johnson. Disregarding mere usage, he follows nature and reason. He considers not the *mode* in which the Greek tragedians arranged their performances, but the ope-

* Mr. Murphy, in his *Life of Johnson*, p. 155.

ration of passion, sentiment, and character in real life. He estimates imitative works by their likeness to originals. As a biographer, he stands unrivalled. He thoroughly knew the human understanding and heart; was perfectly acquainted with the kind of circumstances in which his subjects acted; with their individual history and character. In his literary portraits he ably marks the progress of mind; the incidents and causes which retarded or accelerated its movements, and the completion of its powers, attainments, and exertions. As a philologist, Johnson had not mere knowledge, but also science: he not only collected usages, but investigated principles. He has enriched our language; and improved it, if not in ease and elegance, in precision and force. In politics he shewed less advancement than in philology, criticism, biography, and ethics. I do not mean the erroneousness only of his particular notions, but the mode of his general reasoning. In his other writings he is practically wise; in his political, speculatively abstract.

From the whole of his works numerous and important additions have been made to the general mass of information ; and still more momentous accessions to the general mass of instruction. Such have been the consequences of an extraordinary mind, exerted upon objects dependent for success on its intrinsic efforts. The moral character of Johnson was as estimable as his intellectual was admirable. He was temperate, intrepid, magnanimous, just, pious, benevolent, and beneficent. His head, his heart, his purse, were employed in doing good, and in dispensing happiness. His manners were less agreeable than his other qualities were valuable. His temper was irritable ;— he was impatient of folly and frivolity. He had an INTOLERANCE TO NONSENSE, very unpleasing to its numerous votaries ; and very troublesome in the intercourse of fashionable life : he was peculiarly inimical to nonsense and folly, arrayed in the garb of sense and wisdom. But, with some defects in his social habits, he was, as a moral

and a religious being, far above common men.

Johnson esteemed Burke above all men : he said, he was a perpetual stream of mind. ‘ Burke is the only man whose common conversation corresponds with the general fame he has in the world. Take up whatever topic you please, he is ready to meet you.’ As Johnson always praised the wonderful genius of Burke, Burke allowed the extraordinary talents of Johnson. One evening that they spent in company with Mr. Langton, Johnson happened to take most of the conversation. On their way home, Burke observed to Langton, that Johnson had been very great that night. Langton admitting this, added, ‘ he wished he had heard more from another person.’ ‘ Oh, no,’ said Burke, ‘ it is enough for me to have rung the bell to him.’ This observation arose from Burke’s modesty : had he appreciated with impartiality his own powers, he would have reflected that Johnson or no man was his superior in genius

and acquirements. That was, indeed, Johnson's own opinion. He one day quoted, as a very high compliment, an eulogium on his journey to the Western Islands. ' Mr. Jackson,' he said, ' told me, there was more good sense upon trade in it, than he should hear in the House of Commons in a year, except from Burke.' Burke, who, as well as his friend Johnson, delighted most in exhibitions of human nature, preferred those parts of the tour that describe the inhabitants to those which merely paint the face of the country.

Burke was one of the chief mourners at the funeral of his illustrious friend; the others were, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir John Hawkins, Mr. Coleman, and the deceased's faithful black servant. These were present, besides Dr. Horsley, General Paoli, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Malone, and many other distinguished persons. Burke, in the ardour of his feeling for the loss of Johnson, uttered the following sentence:—' He has made a chasm which not only nothing can fill up,

but which nothing has a tendency to fill up—Johnson is dead. Let us go to the next best.—There is nobody.—No man can be said to put you in mind of Johnson.’ If Burke’s own mind had been uniformly directed to literature and philosophy, as Johnson’s was, and not interrupted by party politics, he would have been even greater than Johnson.

Although, except Burke, there was no man whose literary powers were equal to those of Johnson, there were still some men of very great talents, and many of considerable abilities. Robertson, from the publication of his *American History*, had rested on his shield. Gibbon had now given to the world a great portion of his able and operose work ; a work of which the pious men may disrelish some parts, on account of the anti-christian tendency ; acute reasoners may alledge, that to promote his favourite notions, he often makes assertions without proof ; yet every reader of judgment, comprehension, philosophical and po-

litical knowledge, must allow, that it is a most illustrious monument of industry and genius. Another history had just appeared, embracing periods much better known; but, though reciting transactions with which every literary man was well acquainted, exhibiting new and profound views of the character of the agents, and unfolding moral and political causes; marking their operation and effects. The philosophical pen of Fergusson rendered Roman affairs the ground-work of the deepest and most expanded moral and political science. Reid was applying to the subtle subjects of pneumatology the Baconic organ,—induction,—much more invariably, and consequently more successfully, than any preceding metaphysicians. Horsley was defending our religious articles and establishments against the theories and operations of misemployed genius and learning. Watson was exhibiting the best doctrines and models of divinity; attending to ESSENTIALS, REASON AND TRUTH, in the learning brought forward, rather than to *adventitious considerations* in

the SECT or *condition* of its teachers. Blair was promoting practical religion and morality, by making taste the auxiliary of just sentiment and reasoning ; and was disseminating the love of elegant literature, by simplifying to common capacities the rules for the various branches of composition : performances of a lighter cast contain the appropriate excellence. The *Rolliad* and *Birtb-day Odes* were very happy effusions of wit and satire. Miss Burney redeemed novels from the disrepute into which they had fallen.

Burke was at this time engaged about no literary production ; his attention, though partly devoted to the temporary subjects of parliamentary discussion, such as the Scrutiny and Irish Propositions, was chiefly employed about Indian affairs. From the year 1772 he had kept a watchful eye over the conduct of the Company's servants. He had accurately investigated the circumstances and causes of Lord Pigot's imprisonment in 1776, and has been one of the principal

agents in the establishment of the delinquency of the Company's officers, and ascertaining the causes. Afterwards, when Dundas was investigating the conduct of Rumbold, some circumstances were brought forward respecting Mr. Hastings, from which Burke conceived that there was ground for an inquiry into his conduct.

In contemplating Indian affairs, the Nabob of Arcot's conduct and transactions came to be very minutely considered by him, and were the subject of a very able speech in the succeeding session.

This year Burke was chosen Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow. Having arrived in Edinburgh, he was received with the merited attention by those of the *literati* of the place who were able to appreciate his extraordinary excellence in that pursuit which had procured themselves so much distinction. Doctors Fergusson and Robertson regarded with the highest esteem a genius so exalted. A gentleman of equal talents,

and now of equal celebrity, being by age more active, undertook to do the literary honours of the Scottish capital to so distinguished a visitant. Mr. Dugald Stewart accompanied Mr. Burke to Glasgow ; and then impressed on his fellow traveller the opinion which all literary men, capable of comprehending and estimating philosophic genius, now entertain.

At Glasgow, in the venerable, learned, and eloquent Leechman, and the profound investigator and luminous explainer of the human mind, Reid, Mr. Burke saw that Edinburgh did not monopolize superior genius. With Reid, who, from similarity of minds and studies, was, notwithstanding the great diversity of their age, the most intimate friend of Mr. Stewart, he more frequently associated than with any other of the Glasgow men of learning and ability. He was greatly pleased with a sermon which he heard from Mr. Arthur, one of the clergymen of the city, and afterwards successor to Dr. Reid in the Moral Philosophy chair.

The following account of Mr. Burke's inauguration is extracted from the periodical publications of the time. ' April 10th, 1784, the Right Honourable Edmund Burke was installed in the office of Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow; he was attended by several persons of rank and eminence; the spectators were very numerous, and testified their satisfaction by the highest marks of approbation and applause. His Lordship, after taking the oaths of office, addressed the meeting in a very polite and elegant speech, suited to the occasion. Having attended public worship in the College chapel, he was afterwards entertained by the gentlemen of the University.'

July 14th a cause was tried before Mr. Justice Buller and a special jury for a libel against Mr Burke by the Public Advertiser. Two men had been pillored at Bristol, for an unnatural crime, and had been very severely beaten and abused by the multitude, to the danger of their lives. The humanity of Burke interested itself in the sufferings of wretches,

however worthless, when those sufferings arose not from the sentence of the law, but from the violence of individuals. An infamous paragraph appeared in the papers, insinuating that Burke's reprobation proceeded not from abhorrence of the cruelty, but from sympathy with the criminals. So very scandalous a libel was referred by Burke, without any animadversions from himself, to the Attorney-General. A prosecution was commenced, and a hundred and fifty pounds damages awarded to the plaintiff.

About the time that this atrocious calumny appeared against Burke's character, there was a very daring attack made upon his property, and not without success. September 28th, his house at Beaconsfield was broken open, and robbed of a variety of plate and other valuable articles. The robbers proceeded with a degree of deliberation not very common in such adventures. They came down from London in a phaeton, which they had hired in Oxford-street. They broke open a field-gate at the side of the road, op-

posite to the avenue which leads to the house, and left their phaeton in a corner of the field. Mr. Burke was in town, but Mrs. Burke and the rest of the family were at Beaconsfield. The rogues made their way into the house through the area. They proceeded to the place where the plate in daily use was kept, the rest being in an iron chest in a pantry, in which the butler slept : having got 150*l.* worth, they retreated with their booty. They left behind them a match and tinder-box, a sack, a wax taper, a fashionable cane, and an iron instrument for forcing window-shutters. They also left a tea canister, which they carried out of the house ; but they broke it open, and took out of it all the tea. The robbery was discovered about six o'clock, and a pursuit instantly set on foot, but to no purpose. It was afterwards found that they had crossed the country to Harrow, and from Harrow returned to town, through Islington. The perpetrators were suspected to have been a discharged servant and accomplices, but it was not ascertained.

January 25th, 1785, Parliament met. The first occasion on which Burke made a speech, calling forth his powers, was on the payment of the Nabob of Arcot's debts. On the 28th of February, Fox made a motion for the production of papers relative to the directions by the Board of Controul for charging on the revenues of the Carnatic the Nabob of Arcot's private debts to Europeans. Dundas maintained that a principal part of the debt was just, as far as the documents in their possession could be credited, and that the remainder was to be the subject of discussion; that the claimants might prefer their claims, subject to the examination of the other creditors, the debtor, (the Nabob himself) and of the Company, whose revenues the result would affect. Burke, who had been at great pains to render himself completely informed respecting the affairs of India, delivered an oration displaying most extensive knowledge of that country, and the wisest general principles. If the facts were as he represented them, *the alledged* debts arose from a collusion be-

tween the Nabob and certain servants of the Company, who had been guilty of the most heinous frauds, oppression, and cruelties, The pictures of the sufferings of India, and of the wickedness of its plunderers and oppressors, in force, animation, and colouring, equal any that had ever been presented, exhibiting misery and guilt.

A motion being made for a parliamentary reform by Mr. Pitt, April 18, and supported with great ability by him, Mr. Fox, Mr. Dundas, and other gentlemen, Burke, conformably to that general plan which had ever regulated his political reasonings and conduct, declared himself inimical to any change in the representation. On that subject he took an opportunity of reprobating the dissemination of doctrines among the people, tending to persuade them that they were aggrieved in the inequality of franchises. ‘The people,’ he said, ‘were very quiet and contented until they were told that their constitutional rights were violated.’

Mr. Richard Burke, Edmund's son, imbibed the opinions of his father, on the inexpediency of innovation in the constitution of the Legislature. When Major Cartwright wrote very earnestly in support of Universal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments, Richard published a most acute answer, shewing the danger of such a project, and characterising the classes of individuals who were most favourable to its adoption.

Lord North also spoke very ably against a reform, and the bill was thrown out by a considerable majority.

The greater part of the remainder of the session was occupied about the commerce of Ireland.

As in the year 1780 the trade of the sister kingdom had been freed from the hurtful restrictions by which it had long been shackled, and which the wisdom and eloquence of Burke so clearly saw, conscien-

tiously attacked, and ably exposed ; and as in 1782 the independence of its Parliament had been established, an important object remained for the consideration of the governments of the two countries, in the settlement of a system of commercial intercourse between them, on the firm basis of reciprocity and mutual advantage. To effectuate this beneficial purpose, Mr. Pitt made a very minute and extensive inquiry into the relative and absolute state of manufactures, and other materials of commerce, in both kingdoms. Receiving, in *resolutions of the Irish House of Commons*, assurances of the wish of that body to settle their commercial intercourse on the basis of reciprocity, and also the outlines of a plan for the purpose, he submitted to the house propositions to be offered to Ireland on the part of Britain. These he reduced into two general heads:—

First, The importation of the produce of our colonies in the West Indies and America into Ireland.

Secondly, A mutual exchange between the two countries of their respective productions and manufactures upon equal terms.

The examination of merchants and manufacturers took up so much time, that for some weeks there was little or no debate in the House of Commons. The propositions afterwards were the subject of very ample discussion, during which the leading men on both sides distinguished themselves. They passed through both houses of the British Parliament ; but, when offered to the consideration of the Irish, they experienced so cool a reception, and so small a majority, that their virtual abandonment was deemed expedient.

The Irish propositions called forward less the oratorical powers or philosophical expansion of Burke, than the extent and minuteness of his knowledge. This appeared very striking in his conversations on the materials and processes of various articles of manufacture, the market for them, and the

probability of its being affected by the proposed plan. Indeed no subject escaped his attention.

Burke, whenever he spoke of the enormities of the East India Company's servants, described Mr. Hastings as the Captain-General of iniquity ; and pledged himself to bring forward momentous charges against him, as soon as he should arrive in England. During the recess of 1785 Mr. Hastings returned from India. Parliament met January 24, 1786. After his Majesty's speech had undergone a discussion, Major Scott, agent to the late Governor-General of Bengal, reminded the house that Mr. Hastings had been some months arrived from his government ; and he, therefore, called on Mr. Burke to bring forward the charges. Mr. Burke replied to the Major, by relating an anecdote of the great Duke of Parma, who, being challenged by Henry the Fourth of France ' to bring his forces into the open field, and instantly decide their disputes,' answered, with a smile, ' that he knew very

well what he had to do, and was not come so far to be directed by an enemy.

Though Burke did not immediately proceed to the proposed investigation of Mr. Hastings's conduct, it now engaged his attention so much that he did not enter greatly into other subjects of parliamentary deliberation. On the Duke of Richmond's plan of fortification, while Pitt, of the Ministers, stood almost alone, Opposition was conducted by the joint ability of Mr. Windham, Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Fox, Lord North, and Mr. Sheridan ; but without the aid of Burke. On the reduction of the national debt, the transfer of duties on wine from the Customs to the Excise, and several other subjects of consequence, he did not take an active part.

February 17th he called the attention of the house to the conduct of Mr. Hastings.

No measure, which he ever supported, subjected Burke to more obloquy and abuse than the prosecution of Hastings. The

most frivolous, contemptible, and malignant motives were ascribed to him by those who either were favourable to the Governor-General, from admiration of his general conduct, from gratitude for particular benefits, or pretended to be so from receiving pay. Mr. M'Cormick, in deducing the proceedings of Burke from resentment against Mr. Hastings, on account of inattention to Mr. William Burke, is merely the repeater of hacknied abuse ; and has not, as in many of his assertions against this great man, the merit of originality. That Burke, or any man, would undertake so laborious a task, which required such minuteness of investigation concerning so intricate details, the materials to be fetched from such a distance, with so great and powerful a body inimical to an inquiry, merely because his friend had been slighted, is hardly within the compass of credibility. The allegation is supported by no proof, and is altogether improbable.*

* The same observation will apply to all the other prosecutors, as far as they were concerned ; but to none with

Although the prosecution of Hastings long engaged, and at last fatigued the public attention ; and although Burke's conduct in it has been often discussed ; yet there are many who have neither considered the rise and progress of the discussion, nor the series of Burke's proceedings, so as to be able to form an accurate estimate of his motives and reasons. It may, therefore, be not irrelative to the object of this work to take a

more justness than to Mr. Francis. If riches or power had been the objects of that gentleman, whether would his official situation best enable him to gratify avarice or ambition, in supporting or opposing the Governor-General, who had so much the means of bestowing riches and power ? Was it by thwarting the dispenser of wealth and high appointment that he could most effectually promote the interest of either himself or his friends ? What benefit could have accrued to him from the admission of charges which he should know to be unfounded ? What motives could be assigned for such a conduct ? Mr. Francis is a man, and, as of that species, must act from some such motive as prompts the actions of other men. To justify the hypothesis, that he made charges which he himself did not believe to be true, another must be admitted, that he is a being *sui generis*, and not actuated by the usual inducements of the rest of mankind. The reader will observe, that it is not here meant to *impeach* Hastings, but to shew the absurdity of that censure which imputes conduct to which *there exist not motives*.

short review of the steps that led to the impeachment.

The act of 1773 had empowered his Majesty to constitute a supreme court of judicature, whose authority should extend to British subjects, or such others as were for the time employed in the service of the India Company. Complaints were made by the Supreme Council, private subjects of Britain in India, and the Company, 1. That the Judges had greatly exceeded their powers: 2. That it extended its jurisdiction to persons whom it does not appear to have been the intention of the King or Parliament to submit to its jurisdiction: 3d. That it has taken cognizance of matters, both originally and pending the suit, the exclusive determination of which they humbly conceive it to have been the intention of the King and Parliament to leave to other Courts: 4. That the Judges consider the criminal law of England as in force, and binding upon the natives of Bengal, though utterly repugnant

to the laws and customs by which they have formerly been governed. Petitions were presented to Parliament by three classes, affected by what they conceived to be an unwarranted assumption of jurisdiction : first, the agents of the British subjects ; secondly, the Governor-General and Council ; thirdly, the Company. Two committees were appointed and employed at the same time, in 1780 and 1781, on India affairs. The one was a *select*, the other a *secret*-committee. Of the former, General Richard Smith was chairman ; of the latter, Mr. Dundas. In supporting the establishment of two committees, Burke said in the house,

‘ Try what the open, what the covert yield.’

The petitions were referred to the Secret Committee, composed of members of different sides of the house, of which Burke was one. The object of the Committee was an inquiry into the proceedings, not of Mr. Hastings, but of the Judges. A great variety of facts were stated to

the Committee, particularly under the first head of complaint. It appeared, that the English Judges had taken cognizance of causes between native land-holders not in the service of the Company ; consequently, by the Act of Parliament, not within the jurisdiction of the English Court ; and had proceeded in several cases to inflict severe penalties on those who refused to recognize their authority. The most important instances of alledged extra-judicial assumption were, in civil actions, the Patna and the Cossijurah causes. In the first, two native magistrates, men of rank and respectability, were imprisoned, and their effects confiscated, by an English Sheriff, for their official conduct in a case out of the jurisdiction of the English Court. In the second, the Rajah of Cossijurah having resisted the jurisdiction of the Court, the Sheriff had dispatched an armed force to compel obedience ; but the Governor-General and Council ordered a more numerous body to march speedily, and prevent what they con-

ceived to be illegal acts. The most noted instance of interference in extra-judicial cases of criminal process was the trial and execution of Nundcomar for forgery.—Nundcomar, a Hindoo, and a Bramin of the highest cast, was tried, condemned, and hanged, on a statute against forgery, (2d of George II.) so strictly confined and appropriated to *England* and its paper currency, that, by the last clause it is especially provided, that nothing in this Act contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to that part of Great Britain called Scotland. The evidence against him, if not palpably perjured, was at least very suspicious.* Neither he, nor the person whose name was forged, were subject to the jurisdiction of the English Court. By the laws of India forgery is not punishable capitally. Thus a man was put to death by a Court, to which he was not amenable, for a crime not capital by the laws to which he was amenable.

* See Mr. Francis's Answer to Sir Elijah Impey.

These, and many other instances of the usurped jurisdiction, proved to be hateful and terrible to the natives, were reported by the Committee to the house; observations were added, not only on the justice but the political tendency of the usurpation by the Judges. The Committee was now instructed to take a wider range of inquiry: it was 'appointed to take into consideration the state of the administration of justice in the provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, and report the same, as it should appear to them, to the house, with their observations thereupon; and they were instructed to consider how the British possessions in the East Indies may be held and governed with the greatest security and advantage to this country; and by what means the happiness of the native inhabitants may be best promoted.'

Their investigation being now not confined to the proceedings of judicative officers, extended itself to the deliberative and executive. In the course of this discussion,

acts and proceedings of Hastings excited their animadversion. Many statements were laid before the Committee which tended to attach blame to the conduct of the Governor-General; at least, according to the notions of right and wrong that prevailed in England. *

In the management of the revenue, Mr. Hastings had assumed a principle, ' that the ruling power in India was the absolute proprietor of the soil; that, therefore, the Zemindars (or land-holders) were subject to every exaction they could possibly bear; and which the English Government chose to require.' This principle, so contrary to British notions, was also inconsistent with those of India; so that, if, geography changed the nature of justice, such ex-

* Mr. Sheridan, in one of his celebrated speeches on the Begums, delivers an opinion, that right and wrong do not depend upon *geography*. Many may probably think he has *reason* on his side; there is, however, *authority*, and the authority of some of the richest men of the nation, in favour of a maxim, that what would, in Britain, be oppression and robbery, was, in India, justice.

actions were not consonant to justice in India. As the Committee was instructed to consider, among other things, how the security and happiness of the native inhabitants might be best promoted, it was a part of their duty to report conduct which certainly did *not tend to promote that security and happiness.*

The Rohilla war also attracted their notice. The Governor-General had been forbidden by the East India Company to engage in offensive wars. He had, however, assisted the Nabob of Oude, Sujah Dowla, in the reduction and extirpation of the Rohillas. The Committee saw no grounds for this expedition and extirpation. Mr. Hastings, afterwards speaking on this subject, said, ‘an occasion took place, when, by a *slight deviation* from the defensive plan, our alliance with the Nabob might be converted into solid advantages. In effect, the same reasons which before urged us to shun every military expedition, now operated in the contrary direction, and recommended the

employment of our army for the purpose of REDUCING OUR EXPENCES AND ADDING TO OUR CURRENCY.' It is by no means probable, that the Committee would have admitted this principle of Mr. Hastings, that it is a good reason for war, that it may add to currency; in other words, *that aggression is just, when it may bring money*; even had it been laid before them. But as the position had not then been advanced, the Committee had not an opportunity of allowing it the due weight.

It was stated to the Committee that the Rajah Cheyt-Sing had been expelled from Benares for the following reasons:—In an agreement between the Nabob of Oude and the Governor-General, it was settled that Cheyt-Sing, the tributary of Oude, should transfer one half of his tribute to the India Company; that the Zemindary of Benares, which had descended to him from his father, should be guaranteed to him by the Company on paying that tribute; the Company *pledging its faith* that no encroachments should

ever he made *on his rights by the Company*. This faith was pledged for the Company by *the signature* of WARREN HASTINGS. The rights guaranteed by this pledge were, the undisturbed possession of the Zemindary of Benares, on the due performance of his part of the covenant; the payment, monthly, of a sum amounting annually to about 260,000*l*. Cheyt-Sing was uniformly punctual in the stipulated payments, as Hastings himself admitted.

On the breaking out of the war with France in 1778, the Governor-General required from Cheyt Sing a contribution *not* stipulated in the agreement,—the establishment and maintenance of three battalions of Seapoys. Estimating the expence of the required troops at about 55,000*l*. (five lacks of rupees) he ordered the Rajah to pay that sum immediately into the treasury of Calcutta. Cheyt-Sing pleading inability to obey this order of payment, beyond agreement, instantly prayed for delay and for monthly instalments. That accommodation

was not allowed him ; he was compelled to pay the whole of the exaction within three months. The same demand was made the two succeeding years, and the Rajah was obliged to submit.

In 1781, an additional demand of thirteen hundred horse was made by Mr. Hastings. The Rajah equipped part, but declared his inability to furnish the whole of the requisition. Mr. Hastings deigned no answer to this representation ; but proceeded to Benares, accused the Rajah of a conspiracy to stir up rebellion. and finally put him under arrest. The Rajah's subjects conceiving their Lord, to whom they were warmly attached, to be in danger, attacked his guards, and forcing their way through them with great slaughter, rescued the Rajah, and conveyed him to a distant place of refuge. Thence he sent a suppliant letter to the Governor-General ; to which he made no reply, but attacked the troops of Benares as if in a state of rebellion, and soon reduced that whole country. The Rajah re-

tired into banishment among the Mahrattas. The expulsion of a proprietor, on specified conditions, for not complying with every demand *beyond* these conditions, (although he had contributed considerably more than the contract stipulated) by no means accorded with the Committee's ideas of justice.

Hastings declared it to be his opinion, that Cheyt-Sing's REBELLION was only a part of a grand combination against the Company. Rumours had spread that the Begums, the grand-mother and mother of the Nabob of Oude, were concerned in this conspiracy, and had fomented the insurrection in Benares. Certain *jagbires*, (treasures) had been left by the late Nabob for the support of his widow and mother, and the property had been secured to those Princesses by the guarantee of the Supreme Council of Calcutta. After the expulsion of Cheyt-Sing, the Nabob had met Mr. Hastings at Chunar, and a treaty had been concluded between them, by which the

Nabob was *permitted* to resume the jaghires,—to seize upon the property of his parents that was bequeathed to them by his father, and guaranteed by the Council, of which the principal member now sanctioned the confiscation. The Nabob acknowledged a very great debt to the Company; and as his mother and grandmother were very rich in money, jewels, and other effects, *their property* was, no doubt, a very efficient and productive fund for the liquidation of *his debts*. It was, besides, alledged, that the Begums were likely to use their treasures to very pernicious purposes. There could not be more effectual means for preventing them from the misapplication of money, than leaving them none to misapply. The payment to the Company of the treasure so confiscated would, no doubt, *add* to the *currency*: it was, therefore, in the view of emolument a very desirable object. The opinion, that the Begums were likely to make a bad use of their money, had for its support numbers of affidavits, which the Chief-Justice and Mr. Hastings professed to

credit much more than the Committee approved. The matter of the affidavits was chiefly general :—that the Begums were disaffected to the Company; and the evidence hearsay, that it was reported they fomented the rebellion of Cheyt-Sing. No specific proofs were adduced to shew that they were disaffected to the English, fomented the rebellion of the Rajah, or, indeed, that there was any rebellion to foment. Mr. Hastings, however, professed to think otherwise; and at last not only *permitted*, but URGED the Nabob to seize the property of his mother and grandmother. Mr. Middleton, Hastings's agent in that country, was instructed to insist on the Nabob's resumption of the *jagbires*, and found (to use his own words) *much trifling evasion and puerile excuses* in the Nabob, when admonished to *PLUNDER HIS PARENTS*. At length, however, he consented; at least the act was performed, and with such expedition and industry, as to leave the Princesses, before immensely rich, almost without the necessities of life. The Committee disapproved very highly of the

confiscation of the property of the Begums. It is possible, that if a certain witness had been present, and that it had pleased God to allow him the full use of his memory, he might have given to the Committee unequivocal proofs of the purity of the Governor-General's intentions.

It appeared also to the Committee, that PRESENTS had been accepted by the Governor-General, although contrary to the orders of his employers and the tenor of his oath.

To his conduct the war with the Mah-rattas and with Hyder-Ali were imputed by the Committee.

These were the principal heads (though not all) on which the Committee grounded a report, containing strong disapprobation of Hastings's conduct.* The facts were

* See Reports of the Committee on the Affairs of India, published in folio.

certainly such as to justify very unfavourable notions respecting the equity and even policy of Mr. Hastings's government. He might afterwards refute the charges, or assign satisfactory reasons; but as they stood, supported by respectable evidence, it was the duty of Burke, and every other member of the Committee, to make the report they did. There is not the shadow of a proof that Burke was actuated by resentment against Hastings; and if he had, the original object of the Committee did not relate to the Governor-General; he became the object of consideration in the unforeseen progress of inquiry. The result was such, that if Burke was actuated by resentment, duty required the same conduct that resentment would prompt. Mr. Dundas, as chairman of the Committee, brought up the reports. On them was grounded a series of resolutions, condemning, in the most decisive terms, the whole system of Indian politics. The last resolution set forth, 'That Warren Hastings, Esq. Governor-

General in Bengal, and William Hornby, Esq. President of the Council at Bombay, having, in sundry instances, acted in a manner repugnant to the honour and policy of this nation, and thereby brought great calamities on India, and enormous expences on the East India Company, it is the duty of the Directors of the said Company to pursue all legal and effectual means for the removal of the said Governor-General and President from their said offices, and to recall them to Great Britain.*

Burke, whose comprehensive mind considered every subject on which it engaged in all its relations of cause, effect, and circumstances, after the inquiry of the Committee, made India more than ever the subject of his attention; and not discovering exculpatory matter to undo the impression made on him, the Committee, and the house, by the narra-

* The *state* of India during the administration of Mr. Hastings is very strongly depicted in 'Mr. Francis's Letter to Lord North.'

tive of Hastings's conduct, thought that there was sufficient reason for an impeachment. This he pledged himself to move, when Mr. Hastings's return should enable him to refute false charges. What there was in such conduct, on grounds, till overturned, at least probable, to impute it to the operation of resentment, had the existence of that passion, or even of an adequate cause, been proved, it is difficult for an impartial man to discover. If it was resentment, the passion was guided by much more wisdom, and accompanied by much more justice, than it generally admits. Burke waited for an extensive knowledge of facts before he drew a general conclusion, and after he had done so, publicly avowed his resolution ; so that Mr. Hastings had the time and means of bringing forward his defence.

I have thought this recapitulation of the rise and progress of the proceedings against Mr. Hastings necessary, to remind those of my readers who have forgotten the circumstances of the case, that THE DISCUSSION OF

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S CONDUCT WAS NOT OF BURKE'S SEEKING, BUT FORCED ITSELF ON HIM, IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER GENTLEMEN, IN THE PERFORMANCE OF A PARLIAMENTARY DUTY FOR WHICH THEY WERE SELECTED.

It is not my intention to enter into the merit or demerit of Hastings as ascertained after the evidence on both sides had been brought forward. Arguments to prove his innocence would be unnecessary and presumptuous, after its establishment to the satisfaction of the highest court of judicature in the kingdom. An attempt, after such a purgation, to attach guilt to him would be arrogant and indecorous, as it would be setting up the opinion of an individual against the authority of collective wisdom. From the *EVENT of the trial*, compared with the allegations of Burke, many were confirmed in the opinion, that his object was the persecution of a man whom he knew to be not culpable. Whoever considers the Rohilla war, the administration of the re-

venues, the presents, the expulsion of Cheyt-Sing, and the seizure of the treasures of the Begums, with the documents, testimonies, and circumstances that appeared to the Committee, and afterwards, even on the trial, may find sufficient grounds for a man, feeling and reasoning as an Englishman, to impute culpability, great culpability, to Mr. Hastings. His subsequent justification of conduct, apparently blameable, does not render the inquirer into these appearances, and very prominent appearances, of wrong the object of censure. A man must judge from probability, and very strong probability, until it is proved not to be true. Apparent culpability is a proper subject of investigation, although, on inquiry, either proof of guilt should be wanting, or innocence be established. We can no more justly blame Burke, Fox, and Sheridan, for moving an impeachment on the chief subjects, and other gentlemen on less important charges, nor the House of Commons for agreeing to the motions, although the Peers afterwards acquitted the defendant,

than we should blame an Attorney-General for commencing a prosecution upon the probable grounds of oral and written evidence, or a grand jury for finding a bill, although the person arraigned should, on his trial, have a verdict in his favour of *Not Guilty*.

Presuming Hastings, therefore, innocent, because NO PROOFS OF THE CONTRARY WERE FOUND BY THE HOUSE OF PEERS, I shall consider the prosecution against him rather as a display of powers than as an eviñtion of truth. Perhaps never a judicial inquiry called forward such an exertion of genius, such an extent of knowledge, such a force and variety of eloquence. The subjects were indeed of the highest importance; the question was, whether or not a man, entrusted with a power that extended over many millions,—a power designed to be exercised for the joint advantage of its subjects and its bestowers,—was employed for the advantage or hurt of either or both? Whether Mr. Hastings, invested by the India Company with an authority which

rendered the interests of that commercial body and the happiness of the most extensive and populous countries in a great measure dependent on his wisdom and will, had been, on the whole, the author of good or the dispenser of misery? The matter to be determined was not whether a * small island had been plundered by its prætor, † a speculation and oppression, which, if true, from the vicinity of the province to the supreme power, ‡ could be soon punished and easily redressed; but whether a multiplicity of large nations had been pillaged, desolated, and destroyed by the Governor; a speculation and oppression, much more enormous, because the trust was so much more important; the miseries inflicted by its breach must be much more extended; and, from the extent of the sufferings and remoteness of the scenes, redress would be impracticable. The exposure of enormities, which might have taken place in such circumstances, and were alledged to have ac-

* Sicily.

† Verres.

‡ Rome.

tually taken place, required most persevering industry and the greatest ability. Both they occupied. When we consider that, for several years, the conduct of Mr. Hastings employed a great part of the intellectual exertions of Sheridan and Fox, and a much greater portion of those of Burke,—and that, in fact, no material delinquency was proved against the object of the frequent and reiterated attacks of so extraordinary force and perseverance,—can we refrain from thinking these operations, respecting *their professed object*, a WASTE OF GENIUS?—a waste unparalleled in the annals of intellectual effort. If Hastings had been really guilty, their time would have been mispent, because they did not bring the proofs to demonstrate that guilt to the Judges: if really innocent, their powers and labours were misemployed, in endeavouring to prove what was not to be proved.

The friends of Hastings very injudiciously and uncandidly ascribed bad or frivolous motives to the chief men on both sides of

the house who voted for the impeachment. Their assertions or constructions, however, prove nothing against the propriety of the measure. It was very easy to assert that Burke was actuated by resentment ; that Fox, Sheridan, Windham, Courtenay, and other leading members of Opposition, merely wished to gratify Burke ; or that Pitt, Dundas, Grenville, and other leading men of Administration, were actuated by jealousy of the influence of Hastings. It requires no great ability to assign bad motives ; and besides, the motives, even were they proved to be bad, would not affect the truth or falsehood of any proposition which they might dictate. If we believe a friend to be innocent, and able to prove his innocence, we are very imprudent, and indeed very foolish, in resting his exculpation on any thing extrinsic.

Although I certainly must consider the wonderful eloquence displayed during the proceedings respecting Hastings as eventually a waste of genius, yet I am far from meaning to say, that at the time it was a

wrong direction of talents. Besides, the speeches of the great orators contain a very uncommon portion of the wisest general observations. The opening speech of Burke on the modes of bringing a public delinquent to justice, on the character and situation of the accuser, and the motives by which he ought to be actuated, exhibit at once a most extensive knowledge of the crown law of this kingdom, of the science of jurisprudence, and of ethics in general; and in that view, without considering its reference to Mr. Hastings, it combines legal information and moral instruction. His speech on the Rohilla war unites a most complete acquaintance with the Roman policy in the management of distant provinces, and that of modern Europe, to the wisest and most liberal principles respecting that department of government. His eloquence, if it did not prove the points he wished to establish concerning Hastings, and was in that view a waste of genius, yet contains facts, images, sentiments, and philosophy, that render it delightful and estimable.

That mind which could itself produce such astonishing intellectual efforts, paid the just tribute of praise to extraordinary exhibitions of genius in others. On the celebrated speech of Sheridan on the Begum charge, he bestowed the following very high, but not exaggerated panegyric.

‘ He has this day surprised the thousands, who hung with rapture on his accents, by such an array of talents, such an exhibition of capacity, such a display of powers, as are unparalleled in the annals of oratory; a display that reflected the highest honour upon himself—lustre upon letters—renown upon Parliament—glory upon the country. Of all species of rhetoric, of every kind of eloquence that has been witnessed or recorded, either in ancient or modern times; whatever the acuteness of the bar, the dignity of the senate, the solidity of the judgment-seat, and the sacred morality of the pulpit, have hitherto furnished, nothing has surpassed, nothing has equalled what we have heard this day in Westminster-

Hall. No holy seer of religion, no sage, no statesman, no orator, no man of any literary description whatever, has come up, in the one instance, to the pure sentiments of morality, or in the other, to that variety of knowledge, force of imagination, propriety and vivacity of allusion, beauty and elegance of diction, strength and copiousness of style, pathos and sublimity of conception, to which we have this day listened with ardour and admiration. From poetry, up to eloquence, there is not a species of composition, of which a complete and perfect specimen might not, from that single speech, be culled and collected.

After quoting this encomium, Mr. M'Cormick makes the following observations, which require animadversion. 'How sweet is praise, when uttered by the lips of eloquence! Yet sweeter still, when it flows from the heart of sincerity! But Mr. Burke's language on this occasion was dictated by artifice. The near observers of his sentiments and emotions could perceive that he

felt himself surpassed by Mr. Sheridan in all the favourite walks of his own genius ; that the canker-worm of envy had gnawed its way into his bosom ; and that he strove to conceal its sharp corrosion under the shew of the most zealous and liberal applause.'

There is nothing easier than to assign bad motives, but their existence is to be proved by something more convincing than mere assertion. Is there any evidence that Sheridan was the object of envy to Burke? Mr. McCormick adduces none. There is, therefore, only his affirmation, to which a negative is an equivalent. But, as a matter of verisimilitude, what is there in the relative talents, character, and situation of both, that could render it probable? Sheridan is, no doubt, a man of great genius and great eloquence; but is there any thing in his genius or eloquence, the superiority of which could gnaw the mind of Burke? Let an impartial reader peruse the speeches and consider the efforts of both, and answer this question: let him read the most admired

productions of that very admirable orator, and let him compare them with the speeches of Burke on American taxation, on reconciliation, on œconomy, on the India-bill, on the opening of the charges against Hastings, and let him shew in Burke that inferiority which only can be the cause of envy. From the manner in which Mr. McCormick expresses himself, it would appear, that it was parliamentary eloquence in which Sheridan displayed such powers as to mortify Burke. But could he be supposed to be so ignorant of his own extraordinary talents, as to be mortified by the exhibition of very great talents in any one? If the perception of very great parliamentary abilities in another was to fill the breast of Burke with jealousy and rage, that cause must have existed respecting another person of his own party certainly as much as concerning Sheridan. No man can admire the force and versatility of Sheridan's genius more than I ; but certain I am that I do not under-rate it, when I think, that a man could not envy his senatorial powers, who

would not envy those of Fox ; and there is neither proof nor any allegation that Burke did so. If literary talents were to excite the envy of Burke, was there any man he knew in that species of excellence superior to the Litchfield sage? And there was never the smallest evidence, nor, indeed, insinuation, that Burke envied Johnson. Was there any thing in the situation of Sheridan that could corrode the breast of Burke? Were situation to be always proportionate to abilities, both were in a condition much less exalted than their elevated genius—but Sheridan was not higher than Burke. In the esteem of those whose opinion they would both think the most valuable, was Sheridan above Burke? Was he more highly praised by the Duke of Portland, Earl Fitzwilliam, and others of the highest rank of their friends ; or by Mr. Windham, Mr. Fox, and others of the highest talents? In the opinion of the world Sheridan did not stand higher. Thus, there existed no cause which could render it probable that Burke was actuated by such a passion. Mr.

McCorinick brings no proof from Burke's words or actions, that he was envious of Sheridan. Unsupported by proof, and contrary to probability, this injurious charge against the character of a most extraordinary personage falls to the ground:—it is a charge that the liberal and great mind of Sheridan himself could not believe to be well founded. Since I wrote the first edition, I have been informed that Mr. Burke by no means liked Mr. Sheridan so much as he esteemed his genius. He thought, during the last years of his connection with him and Mr. Fox, that Mr. Sheridan had too much influence over his admired friend; this dislike, however, had, or *could have* in it nothing of envy.

The commercial treaty with France first occupied Parliament during the succeeding session. This treaty, believed to be the result of the extensive information of Hawkesbury, the acuteness and diplomatic knowledge of Eden, ministering to the comprehensive genius of Pitt, was considered in

two relations,—commercial and political. As to its mercantile arrangements, it was the triumph of commercial philosophy over usage, and of a general over partial interest. It was a practical application of the principles and demonstrations of Smith concerning the reciprocal advantages, to skilful and industrious nations, of a free trade. The discussions of the treaty, both in the House of Peers and Commons, called forward the most important subjects of œconomical science. Its political object was liberal and great,—it was to terminate the animosities between Britain and France, that had been productive of so great evils to both. Whether it was or was not attainable, it is now impossible to ascertain, as the circumstances are so totally changed. It was to its political tendency that the principal opposition was made. Fox endeavoured to shew, that France still continued her plans of ambition, although she varied her modes of execution. While amusing us, he said, with commercial connections, she was, by the increase of her marine, and her intrigues with foreign states,

preparing for political annoyance. This ground was also taken by Burke. He had, at the commencement of the American war, and on every other occasion, endeavoured to impress on the house and nation the aspiring views of France,—that the supremacy over Europe and its dependencies was the object; that Britain was the most formidable opponent to her aggrandizement; that the humiliation of Britain was considered as the necessary, and, indeed, only means of certainly accomplishing her ends; that the animosity of rivalry inspirited the operations of ambition; that the mutual action and re-action of these principles had, on every opportunity, manifested themselves. The doctrine he held before, the doctrine he held then, the doctrine he held since, the doctrine he held always, was the same—Trust no friendly protestations from France:—France hates Britain; France would subject Britain; FRANCE HAS THE WILL TO CONQUER BRITAIN, BUT WANTS THE POWER. LET US GUARD AGAINST INCREASING HER POWER AND INFLUENCE, THROUGH SUPINE-

NESS OR CREDULITY, WHOSE INTENTIONS ARE SO MALIGNANT. A few months afforded a striking instance, that while her professions were friendly, her intentions were hostile ; that she was employing every effort of policy to detach from us our natural ally ; and was preparing to second her intrigues by force, when the vigour of the British cabinet and the activity of Prussian troops defeated her machinations.

In Mr. Pitt's motion for the consolidation of the Customs Opposition unanimously acquiesced, and Burke betowed on it very high praise.

March 28, 1787, a motion was made for repealing the Test-Act. Although Burke had been, in 1772, favourable to a similar motion in behalf of the Dissenters (though a motion not altogether to the same extent) he did not support* the repeal. His detractors charged him with inconsistency for

* He withdrew from the house without voting.

this conduct.* But if we examine the real circumstances of the case, we shall find no inconsistency in the support at one time, disapprobation at another; and that both were guided by liberal and sound policy. Indulgence to a part was wise and benevolent, when not interfering with the good of the whole. In 1772, there were among the Dissenters no *known* principles inimical to our establishment. Before 1787, principles unfavourable to the constitution of our state had been published by their leading men, and had been reprobated, as was before shewn, by Burke; not only principles, but designs hostile to our church establishment had been avowed by a most distinguished person among them. ‘They were,’ Dr. Priestley informed the public, in a pamphlet, ‘wisely placing, as it were, grain by grain, a train of gunpowder, to which the match would one day be laid to blow up the fabric of error, which could never be again raised

* In the Monthly Review for October, 1798, there is a letter to me on this subject; my answer is in the Anti-Jacobin for November, 1798. R. R.

upon the same foundation.' This declaration by a MINER was a sufficient reason and prudence for keeping him and his connections at such a distance from our fabric as to prevent the intended explosion.* From their recent conduct and declarations, Burke saw a danger in encouraging the Dissenters, which he could not have seen at a former period, because it did not exist.

Pitt, although he, from the philosophical enlargement of an enlightened mind, had been friendly to the Dissenters, when he

* The sanguineness of Priestley's temper here prevailed over his wisdom. It was certainly very unwise to tell the supporters of the Church, who were by far the more powerful body, that he designed to subdue them; he could not hope thereby to intimidate them to submission, but might expect to put them on their guard. The loquacious exultation of anticipated success is often a most powerful obstacle to its attainment. Conspiracies, that would have eluded the penetration of wisdom, have been exposed by the premature triumph of ringleaders and accomplices; no doubt such exposure, though even by the most ingenious and learned man, is foolish. Hence we may learn how absurd their reasoning is, who in any case infer innocence, merely because the alledged operation of guilt would imply folly.

considered the differences between them and the Church as being merely about speculative points, yet, when he saw proceedings intended to subvert so important a part of our polity, thought circumspection and vigilance absolutely necessary. When there was an avowed design to sap the fortress, it became the duty of the garrison to secure the out-posts. Lord North, in opposing the appeal, besides the consideration of general expediency, by which men of such minds as Burke and Pitt are influenced in political conduct, had the additional motives of particular notions. He was, though not a bigotted,* a strenuous high churchman, had uniformly opposed the Dissenters merely when maintaining articles contrary to his belief, without cherishing designs subversive of the constitution, which he supported.

As Lord North and Burke were both men of great classical erudition, and very frequently introduced quotations from ancient

* He was too mild and benevolent for a bigot.

authors, they sometimes had friendly disputes concerning some of the passages. Burke had studied ancient language merely as a vehicle of ancient ideas. Lord North, besides studying it for the purpose which GENERAL REASON DICTATES, was thoroughly acquainted with it in the way which *local usage prescribes*: having been taught at Eton, he was perfectly instructed in the metrical parts. He was, however, by far too able a man to value himself on so easy and mechanical an acquirement as versification. One day, Burke having occasion to use the Latin word *vectigal*, pronounced it vectigal: Lord North told him, it should be vectīgal. Burke proposed a bet of a guinea: Lord North agreed, and of course gained. In the prosody of the language, both the Scotch and Irish are, no doubt, much inferior to the English; and we hear mistakes as to quantity from some of the ablest and most learned men among them which an English boy would detect. I remember once to have heard some Latin conversation between a very respectable master of an

academy near London, esteemed among the best scholars in the profession, and one of the first literary Scotchmen of the age ; both spoke the language with fluency and propriety in other respects, but the latter not in point of prosody. It was with difficulty that the master of the academy convinced the learned Doctor that he was not erroneous in pronouncing *confēro*, *confēro*. Although he has manifested himself to the world to be most intimately and profoundly conversant in the history, character, genius, customs, manners, laws, and politics of the Romans, yet was he inaccurate in their sounds ; although few *men* in England could equal him writing *sense* prose, yet many *boys* might surpass him in writing *nonsense* verses.

Little, except the impeachment of Hastings, engaged the political attention of Burke until the time of the REGENCY.

To dwell upon the melancholy event that rendered a plan of Regency necessary, would

be extremely absurd, indecorous, and unfeeling. It, however, in the alarm during the calamity and the joy at the recovery of the personage whom it had pleased Heaven to afflict, manifested how highly he was prized by his people.

On its being ascertained that a temporary incapacity existed for exercising the functions of Government, Mr. Fox's idea was, that during this incapacity there was virtually a demise of the Crown; that therefore the next heir should assume the powers of government whilst the incapacity continued. Mr. Pitt's opinion was, that in such a case it rested with Parliament to supply the deficiency, as in other circumstances not before provided for by the existing laws.* Great ability was displayed on both sides; but as the necessity for its exertion on that subject soon ceased, I shall not enter into its details. An in-

* This subject is discussed in a Life of Fox. See Historical Magazine for October, 1799.

genious gentleman compared Burke's efforts on this and other occasions. He was a true Procrastes; whatever argument came in his way, he forced, by *cutting* and stretching, to his instant purpose. The proposal of making the Heir Apparent assume the Government without consent of Parliament, was, doubtless, a very long *stretch* of inference from the Act of Settlement. Much obloquy was attached to Burke on account of the violence of his conduct, and still more, of his expressions. Impartial truth obliges me to acknowledge that his language was very intemperate; it was indeed so much so as to excite the blame of his friends and associates. In estimating character, however, we must take THE WHOLE of *action*, not PART of *expression*. Burke conceived that it was the intention of Ministry to make the Regent dependent on a party, of which they were the heads; and certainly displayed very extraordinary abilities in opposing their plans, whether they were selfish or patriotic. 'There was,' he said, 'a partition of power, in which

the Prince was destined to have an official, a mere nominal character; while all the places and real dignities were given to another. This partition was more odious and offensive than the famous Partition Treaty, relative to the succession, on the death of the last Prince of the house of Austria. It was a partition founded on the most wicked and malicious principle: every thing that was degrading and restrictive, every thing that could stamp suspicion and indignity on the Prince's character, was implied in what the bill withheld from him; while, on the other hand, all that was graceful, all that was calculated to hold up a character as great, as virtuous, and meritorious, was given where an opposition was set up to counteract the Executive Government. Burke's intemperance in debate appeared, perhaps, more during the Regency discussion than at any other time. Once, when he was called to order, he made the following reply: 'Order is an admirable thing, perfect in all its limbs, only unfortunately it squints, and wants the aid of some expert oculist to enable it to see

straight. I also wish to preserve the utmost delicacy ; but Delicacy, though a being of perfect symmetry like the former, is only a subsidiary virtue, and ought always to give way to truth, where the case was such, that the truth was infinitely of more consequence than the delicacy.' Burke drew up the questions addressed to Mr. Gill, the Lord Mayor, containing very bitter invectives against Administration. He also wrote an answer to Mr. Pitt's Letter to the Prince of Wales. Indeed he, however reprehensible in the violence of his expressions, displayed his talents during the Regency bills fully as much as at any other period of his life. The view he took of circumstances and proceedings was great and comprehensive, whether just or not ; if there were too frequently sallies of passion, there was always effusion of genius.

While the Regency was the subject of serious consideration in Parliament, it occasioned several very humorous compositions out of doors. Of these, the ' Regency

Cauldron,' in imitation of that of Macbeth's witches, was the most distinguished. So forcible, indeed, was its humour, and brilliant its wit, that by many it was imputed either to Courtenay or Sheridan. There were, indeed, a number of very laughable and ingenious writings subsequent to the 'Rolliad' and 'Birth-day Odes;' such as the 'Cabinet Stud,' 'Royal Recollections,' and many others. On the side of Opposition there was certainly greater versatility and variety of powers than on the side of Ministry. For Administration there were extensive knowledge, comprehensive understanding, strong reasoning, masculine and dignified eloquence; there were industry and practical ability in the conduct of affairs. In the other party, there were, besides the materials and powers of serious reasoning and eloquence, the materials and powers of sportive exhibitions. From the one you could derive information and instruction: from the other, information, instruction, and entertainment. In both you met with the equals of Cicero and Demosthenes. In

the Minority you met with Congreve and Swift. Burke, who was one of the wittiest of men himself, was also the *cause* * of wit in others, as ‘Simkins’s Letters to his Brother Simon in Wales’ can testify.

This versified attack on Burke’s proceedings against Hastings made its first appearance in ‘The World,’ a fashionable paper of the day, conducted by Edward Topham, Esq. the same gentleman, I believe, who before *undertook* to answer Burke’s ‘Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol.’ ‘The World’ teemed with paragraphs, apparently intended to be severe on the conduct of the Managers of Hastings’s trial, and especially on Burke. The strictures on that subject, both in prose and verse, were usually very inferior to ‘Simkins’s Letters.’ The composition of ‘The World’ † was evidently

* The Monthly reviewers, who have done me ample justice in essentials, have here made a trifling mistake as to quotation.

† About the same time that ‘The World’ was so much distinguished for sonorous trifles in prose, there was an

that of a mind by no means congenial, either in taste or genius, to Burke's. It was not surprising that the author of turgid phraseology and pompous inanity, frivolous conceits and declamatory rant, should disrelish beauty, sublimity, knowledge, and philosophy.

Burke frequently spent a considerable part of the recess either in visiting Ireland, or different parts of this kingdom. Some years before the period of his life at which I am now arrived (to the best of my recollection in 1785), Mr. Windham and he took a jaunt to Scotland: they rode their own

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inundation of verse of the same species, under the signatures of *Della Crusca*, *Anna Matilda*, *Laura Maria*, and others, of whose writings the leading characteristics were reciprocity of extravagant compliment, multiplicity of superfluous epithet, and abundance of melodious nonsense. The vigorous and severe satire of Gifford, by his *Mæviad*, either silenced these versifiers, or gave their talents (such as they were) a different direction. *Laura Maria* has been of late extremely prolific in democratic and sentimental novels. See Anti-Jacobin Review of 'Walsingham,' August, 1798, and 'False Friend,' May, 1799.

horses, went by Edinburgh, and proceeded northward to the Highlands. Though Burke, like his friend Johnson, delighted chiefly in the exhibition of the human mind in its constitution and diversity of operations, he also was much delighted with external appearances of nature. Passing through Athol,—a district of Perthshire, watered by the Tay and its tributary rivers, and abounding in picturesque scenery, variegated from the verdant sweetness of cultivated vallies, and of woods interspersed with streams, and divided by a majestic river, to the bare rocks and heathy mountains of the Grampians,—they viewed Dunkeld and Blair, seats of the Duke of Athol, by art and nature wonderfully fitted to gratify a taste for the BEAUTIFUL and SUBLIME. In their way from Dunkeld to Blair, they were very much astonished and delighted with the beautiful villa, parks, and pleasure grounds of Faskally; one of the most charming seats in Scotland, in which the softness and sweetness of nearest scenery is contrasted and enhanced by the prominent boldness and rude

grandeur of the more distant tremendous waterfalls, woody precipices, hills covered with dingy firs, and o'ertopt by high and heathy mountains. Coming, in their return, to a country inn, they were much struck with the beauty and elegant manners of the landlord's daughters. The father, they found, was a gentleman, the representative of a respectable family, but of small fortune; and that in order to enable him to give his children a good education, to supply the deficiency of his patrimony, he had had recourse to industry. Mr. Burke and Mr. Windham were very much pleased with the conversation of the young ladies; and from the first town they came to, sent them a copy of 'Cecilia;' a present at once a high compliment to the taste of the young ladies and the genius of the author; and which they prized very highly, coming from such donors. One of the Misses M'Laren (that was their name) was soon married to a gentleman in the neighbourhood. The younger, some years after, married a medical gentleman who procured

an appointment in India. The following circumstance is said to have produced the appointment and accelerated the marriage. Mr. Dundas, riding from his hunting seat in Strathern, to visit the Duke of Athol at Blair, stopped at the inn. Accosting Miss M'Laren with his usual gallantry, and bestowing high and just praises on her beauty, he said, 'he was surprized that so fine a girl had not got a husband.' 'Sir,' replied she, 'my marriage depends upon you.' 'On me, how so?' 'There is,' she answered, 'a young gentleman, to whom I am under promise of marriage as soon as circumstances will permit. He has been in the shipping service of the East India Company, and wishes to procure a settlement in Bengal, as an intimate friend of his, Mr. Dick, married to my eldest sister, is one of the principal surgeons in Calcutta, and would have it in his power very effectually to serve him in his business.' Mr. Dundas, having, on inquiry, found that Mr. M'Nabb (the gentleman in question) was a man of merit and professional skill, on his return to Lon-

don sent him permission to go to India. The marriage was concluded; soon after they sailed; and are now established at Patna.

Crossing the Tumel, where, near its confluence with the Tay, it forms the beautiful peninsula of Logerait,* the travellers, passing the venerable mansion of Ballechin, proceeded through the winding woods of Strath-Tay, to Taymouth, the seat of the Earl of Breadalbane, one of the most romantic and grandest scenes in the Highlands. Continuing their route by the banks of Loch-Tay, towards Inverary, they one evening came to an inn, near a church-yard: amusing themselves with reading the inscriptions on the tomb-stones, they were addressed by a gentleman in a clerical habit, who, after some conversation, requested their company to drink tea at the parsonage-house. They

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* Heretofore a royal seat, and the residence of Robert II. a monarch, like his descendant Charles II. chiefly distinguished for the number of his progeny.

complied, engaging their host to return with them to the inn to supper. They discovered Dr. M'Intire, the clergyman, to be a man of much information, excellent sense, and peculiarly conversant in the history and actual state of the Highlands. They perceived also, that he was well acquainted with the affairs of India, where he had a son in a high situation. Mr. Burke was amused with the idea, that in a remote and sequestered spot, where there were so few inhabitants, he should accidentally light on the father of a man in high situation in a service, the late head of which he was endeavouring to bring to condign punishment. Burke, who understood the Irish language, spoke to Dr. M'Intire in that tongue. He was answered in Erse ; and they understood each other in many instances, from the similarity of these two dialects of the ancient Celtic. The Doctor shewed him an Irish Bible ; and informed him that there had been no translation of the Scriptures into Erse till about twenty years before : that there was a version of the Testament p^{er}-

lished by the clergyman of the adjoining parish (through which the gentlemen had passed), Mr. Stewart of Killin ; and that that gentleman, in conjunction with two of his sons, and with the assistance of other clergymen, of whom Dr. McIntire himself was one, was preparing a translation of the Old Testament.* Burke expected, and perceived, that his hosts's notions concerning both the authenticity and merit of Ossian by no means coincided with the opinion which he himself had formed. Burke, indeed, admitted that there might be songs in the Erse descriptive of heroes and their

* The chief conductor is Dr. Stewart of Luss, in Dumbartonshire, son to the translator of the Testament. It may have, perhaps, received interruption from the death of his father and brother, but, with the assistance of Dr. Smith of Campbeltown, Mr. Macklagan, and other gentlemen competent to the task, is now said to be considerably advanced. It will be of peculiar advantage at the present momentous season to have a translation of the Bible into the Erse tongue, in order to counteract the malignant efforts of disseminators of infidelity, who have published among the Highlanders versions of Paine's works, and similar productions.

actions, as there are in the Irish, and in all languages; but denied that there was any evidence to prove that a regular epic poem had ever appeared in that tongue; and denied also that the poems, asserted by Mr. Macpherson to be translated from it, in whatever language they had been originally composed, possessed that excellence which Scotch critics ascribed to them. He thought that these, in their strictures upon Ossian, were guided more by national prejudice than by that vigorous investigating genius by which they were generally distinguished.

Mr. M'Cormick, in speaking of the trial of Hastings, endeavours to shew that Burke made a *job* of it for the benefit of his own particular friends. That Burke exerted himself to serve those whom he loved and regarded, no one will deny. He procured for his brother, Richard, the Collectorship of Grenada, during the first administration of Lord Rockingham, and the appointment of Secretary to the Treasury in the last. What member for Bristol, his influence got the

Recordership of that city for his brother also. Richard Burke was a man of very considerable abilities : he was engaged in several publications, and had even by some persons been deemed one of the authors of Junius. Letters that appeared in the Public Advertiser, signed *Valens*, during the American war, were supposed to be written by Richard, with the assistance of William, who afterwards went to India. Meanwhile Richard was studying law, and was called to the bar the same year with Mr. Erskine. He was acquiring reputation, and was highly thought of by Lord Mansfield. His rising character, and the opinion of that eminent man, began to procure him considerable business, when he was appointed Secretary to the Treasury. The duties of his new office interrupted that close application to the law, which might in time have raised him to a high rank in his profession. But, as from his acceptance of that employment, it was presumed that political exertions more than juridical were his object, after his loss of office he did not recover his former busi-

ness as a Counsellor. Still, however, he was esteemed by professional men as a lawyer of great knowledge and talents. As such he was entitled to employment. On the impeachment of Hastings he was recommended by his brother to be one of the Counsel. Is a man blamable for endeavouring to promote a person to an employment, for which he is fit, because that person is his brother? If he is, Burke deserves censure. Burke also proposed Dr. Lawrence to be one of the Counsellors. Dr. Lawrence had displayed great literary talents, both in humorous and serious productions. In addition to his general talents, he was known to be a man of professional industry and ability. Was it a reason, that a person should not be proposed by another to fill an office for which he was fit, because he was the proposer's friend? If that was the case, Burke was to blame. Speaking farther of the Counsel in the prosecution of Hastings, Mr. McCormick says, ' Mr. Burke also took care to introduce his own son into this *profitable job*, as soon as he was called to the

bar.' The answer to this assertion is very short :—Mr. Burke's son was NOT introduced to this *profitable job*. The proof that he was not is the RECORD OF THE TRIAL.

Mr. M'Cormick mentions a report that Burke was a *marriage-broker*, and received a considerable sum of money for effecting an union between the Earl of Inchiquin and Miss Palmer, the niece and heiress of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Although he declares his disbelief of this rumour, he speaks of it in such a way as tends rather to accredit it, to those at least, who should take assertion or insinuation for proof. A report (if such a report existed, which I do not know, as I never heard of it) totally inconsistent with the character of its subject, and supported by no evidence, requires no discussion. Most of these reports and insinuations are associated with the straitened circumstances of Burke; as if it were a necessary consequence, that, because a man is not rich, he will therefore be guilty of roguery.

Burke certainly was far from being attentive to pecuniary concerns : although totally free from the extravagance of profligacy, he was habitually liable to the waste of inattention. He neither gamed, nor indulged in debauchery ; yet he spent a great deal of money, and was often embarrassed. His great mind did not value riches, which he saw could be acquired by the meanest talents and qualities. Judging rightly in not considering money as a constituent of excellence, he acted wrongly in not sufficiently valuing it as an article of use. As a wise man, thinking the possession of money to be no proof of merit, he too much neglected it as an instrument of convenience. He had not a practical impression of the very plain and obvious truth, that, though a weak and ignorant man is not one whit less weak and ignorant for his possessions, a wise and learned man may render his wisdom and learning still more pleasing and useful to others, and himself, with, than without a competent fortune ; that although wealth

ought not to add to the importance of any individual with others deriving no good from it, it is very comfortable to the possessor. Besides, even if he had valued money as much as prudence required, his generosity was so great, that it would most powerfully have counteracted the effects of this valuation. His detractors say that he did not patronize indigent merit: numberless instances might be adduced to prove the contrary. He not only patronized merit, and sheltered it from those attacks which it might otherwise 'from the unworthy take;' but he relieved distress wherever he found it, even although in objects not peculiarly meritorious. His political connections, besides, led to very great expences, both in his general mode of living and in special contributions. There have been several imputations of unjustifiable means used by him to recruit his frequently exhausted finances; but there is no evidence of either the truth of such assertions, or the justness of such suspicions. Wanting probability in his general character, and proof as to particular

acts, they will be more or less readily believed by different persons, according to their consciousness of what they have done themselves, or conception of what they would do in such a situation.

Occasional difficulties in his affairs did not prevent his philosophic mind from enjoying very great happiness in the exercise of the kindest affections to his friends and family. No man, indeed, could be a warmer friend, a more indulgent master, a more affectionate father, and a fonder husband ; no one was, in all his actions, more influenced by his private connections, unless duty interfered.

His desire of extending the means of beneficial conduct made him bestow attention on practical medicine, and he frequently made up prescriptions. He once, in an attempt of this sort, involved himself in very great unhappiness for several hours. Mrs. Burke having been indisposed, her husband undertook to make up a draught ordered by the physician ; but unfortunately mis-

taking one phial for another, he gave her laudanum. The mistake being immediately discovered by examining the other phial, efficacious antidotes were applied ; and the lady, after undergoing much torture from the conflicting operation, to the inexpressible terror and horror of her husband, at length recovered.

Burke lost, in his eminent friend Sir Joshua Reynolds, almost the last of the literary and convivial associates of his early years. Sir Joshua had always regarded Burke as the first of men, and was in turn loved, esteemed, and respected by his illustrious friend. He had assisted him when embarrassed, and, by his will, after cancelling a bond for 2000l. bequeathed him 2000l. more. The orator and painter were so often together, and the fullness of Burke's mind ran in such abundance, force, and clearness, that Sir Joshua must have remembered many of his ideas, and even expressions. At the opening of the Royal Academy, Jan. 2, 1769, Sir Joshua, the Pre-

sident, delivered a discourse on the object of the institution and the principles of painting. At the annual distribution of prizes, he also thereafter delivered an oration on similar subjects. The ingenuity of the reflections, the extent of the knowledge, and the elegance of the composition, made them supposed by some to be the productions of genius more exclusively devoted to literary efforts than Sir Joshua's. They were, at one time, imputed to Dr. Johnson. Admitting the just and philosophical view exhibited by Mr. Courtenay of the influence of that great man's intellectual exertions on literary composition, readers had no evidence that he actually assisted the painter in composing his essays. From his intercourse with Johnson it was probable that he derived knowledge and principles which may have been transfused into his discourses. But neither testimony, nor the internal evidence of the works themselves, are in favour of the supposition that they were written by Johnson. Mr. M'Cormick thinks they must have been written by Burke; and internal evidence is

certainly much more in favour of his hypothesis than of the former. Burke was much more conversant in the fine arts than his friend Johnson. But there is the testimony of Mr. Malone, who had every opportunity, as the constant companion of Sir Joshua, to be informed of the truth during Sir Joshua's life; and as his executor, from the perusal of papers after his death, who had the best means (if any one could have them) of not being deceived himself, and could have no motive to deceive others, positively asserts that they were the composition of Sir Joshua himself. Agreeing, therefore, in the probability, *a priori*, of Mr. M'Cormick's supposition, I think it overturned in fact by the evidence of Mr. Malone. Burke was one of the chief mourners at his friend's funeral. An account of the procession was drawn up by Mr. Burke and Mr. Malone. The following sketch of his character, composed by Burke, was also published. 'His illness was long, but borne with a mild and cheerful fortitude, without the least mixture of any thing irritable or querulous, agreeably to the placid

and even tenor of his whole life. He had, from the beginning of his malady, a distinct view of his dissolution ; and he contemplated it with that entire composure, which nothing but the innocence, integrity, and usefulness of his life, and an unaffected submission to the will of Providence, could bestow. In this situation he had every consolation from family tenderness, which his own kindness had, indeed, well deserved.

‘ SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS was, indeed, on very many accounts, one of the most memorable men of his time. He was the first Englishman who added the praise of the elegant arts to the other glories of his country. In taste, in grace, in facility, in happy invention, and in the richness and harmony of colouring, he was equal to the great masters of the renowned ages. In portrait he went far beyond them ; for he communicated to that description of the art, in which English artists are the most engaged, a variety, a fancy, and a dignity, derived from the higher branches, which even those, who pro-

fessed them in a superior manner, did not always preserve, when they delineated individual nature. His portraits remind the spectator of the invention of History, and the amenity of Landscape. In painting portraits, he appeared not to be raised upon that platform, but to descend to it from a higher sphere. His paintings illustrate his lessons, and his lessons seem to be derived from his paintings.

‘ He possessed the theory as perfectly as the practice of his art. To be such a painter, he was a profound and penetrating philosopher.

‘ In full assurance of foreign and domestic fame, admired by the expert in art and the leared in science, courted by the great, caressed by sovereign powers, and celebrated by distinguished poets, his native humility, modesty, and candour never forsook him, even on surprise or provocation ; nor was the least degree of arrogance or assumption

visible to the most scrutinizing eye, in any part of his conduct or discourse.

‘ His talents of every kind, powerful from nature, and not meanly cultivated by letters, his social virtues in all the relations and all the habitudes of life, rendered him the centre of a very great and unparalleled variety of societies, which will be dissipated by his death. He had too much merit not to excite some jealousy, too much innocence to provoke any enmity. The loss of no man of his time can be felt with more sincere, general, and unmixed sorrow.” Perhaps the history of eloquence does not afford a more masterly instance of panegyric than this which I have just quoted ; at once general and appropriate, compressed and complete ; exhibiting, in a few words, the constituents, operations, and effects of its subject’s characteristic excellence.

Not long before Burke was deprived of his friend Sir Joshua Reynolds, another gentleman, who had once been very intimate with

him, endeavoured to renew their intercourse. Mr. Gerrard Hamilton had always retained a very warm regard for Mr. Burke. He fully admitted his reasons for discontinuing their political connection, and uniformly praised the letter that Burke wrote on the occasion, as one of the finest compositions he had ever perused. He venerated the disinterestedness that had resigned the pension. His admiration of the talents of his late friend rose higher and higher as they more fully unfolded themselves, and many of his exhibitions he contemplated with astonishment. When the abilities of Fox, more exclusively parliamentary, raised him to be the leader of Opposition, Hamilton said, ' In Parliament only would Mr. Fox be the first man ; in Parliament only would Mr. Burke NOT be the first man.' The discriminating mind of Hamilton distinguished between that combination of cognitive and active powers that fits the possessor for *leading* men, and those intellectual powers and attainments which fit the possessor for *delighting, informing, and instructing* men ; between a Themistocles and a So-

crates, a Demosthenes and a Homer, a Cecil and a Bacon. Hamilton did not enter much into any of the political parties during the American war, nor afterwards. He was, indeed, supposed to have been the author of some, at least of one of the letters of Junius, from the well known circumstance of his having, one morning, very accurately discussed to a nobleman the merits of a letter that he conceived to be that day in the Public Advertiser, which he had not then seen; and that it was found afterwards that the insertion of the letter had been that day neglected, but the next morning appeared in it, and was exactly what he had described. His knowledge of it antecedent to publication proves that he either wrote it himself, or had been informed of it by the author. This inference, however, applies to that letter only; and if he embraced any party, he did not publicly embrace it with ardour. As an impartial observer, he perceived the tendency of measures more accurately than those who were actively engaged. When Mr. Fox brought forward his East-India bill, Hamil-

ton immediately saw that the project of administering the commercial and territorial affairs of the Company by a junto, (however individually respectable) appointed by the proposer, would alarm the court, and turn the supporters of the bill out of office. He advised some of the members of the coalition party to dissuade the leaders from persisting in their plan. Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Courtenay, and several other men of high rank in the party, are understood to have privately signified their apprehensions of the consequences; and recommended to the Ministers to leave the management of their commercial concerns to the Company, as some of the Directors had, on that condition, intimated an acquiescence in the rest of the scheme. The advice of Hamilton, and the representation of those members, had not the desired effect. The consequence was as Hamilton had predicted. Soon after the Regency, he expressed an eager desire that Burke and he should return to the footing of former times. Mr. Courtenay, who was

very intimate with both, was one of those who signified to Burke the wish of Hamilton. Burke said that there were several circumstances which would render it impossible for him to have the same pleasure in the company of Hamilton that he had formerly felt; and that he thought, without that, their meeting would not answer any purpose to either. It does not appear that Burke meant to throw any blame on Hamilton himself: but their separation had caused much obloquy, (tho' very unjustly) that made a great impression on the sensibility of Burke, in so much, that though he knew it not to proceed from Hamilton, he could not help associating that gentleman with a subject of uneasiness and displeasure.

I have carried the private history of Mr. Burke somewhat farther than his public, as I am now coming to a momentous subject of his inquiry and portion of his conduct, the series of which I did not wish to interrupt.

Soon after the close of the Regency deliberation commenced the

FRENCH REVOLUTION.

To enable us to estimate the conduct and reasoning of Burke respecting the French revolution, it is necessary to recall to our minds the old government ; the causes and operations that produced and effected a change ; the change itself ; the actual state of opinions, sentiments, and affairs, after it had taken place. From the consideration of these subjects only can it be evinced, whether Burke's proceedings were or were not conformable to wisdom and rectitude. Subordinate to this general subject of discussion is the more special inquiry, whether they were or were not consonant to his former principles and actions ? The object of the first inquiry is THE INTEGRITY OF HIS INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL EXERTIONS, relatively to most momentous concerns of a great portion of mankind, whether his plans and counsels tended to the melioration of the human race :

of the second, whether he has been consistent with himself. The criterion of the former is the nature and tendency of the French revolution; of the latter, his own antecedent principles, declarations, and conduct.

The legitimate object of government is the general good. That government is the best, which produces, FROM PERMANENT CAUSES, the greatest good, and least evil, to those within the sphere of its operation. That this is the true test by which to examine any system of polity, both in its principles and practical effects, will, I believe, be very generally granted. If we weigh the old government of France in this scale, it must be conceded by every impartial man, that it was wanting. Perfection, indeed, is to be expected in no system formed by man: but there are gradations of excellence in human contrivances. There have been many plans of polity, and there are several, in which the general good has been and is much more steadily and successfully pursued than under

the old government of France. Instead of making a part subservient to the whole ; of estimating either permanent regulations or temporary measures by the aggregate of happiness they were calculated to produce, the pleasure and caprice of a very small part was frequently the motive and rule for governing the whole. The comfort and welfare of twenty millions was of little account when compared with the freak or fancy of the Prince, the interest or inclination of his favourites. The suggestion of a priest or a prostitute would desolate a province, and drive from the country its most industrious inhabitants.

In the earlier ages, France had some semblance of a limited constitution. The monarch himself had his power sufficiently, and more than sufficiently, restrained by the feudal aristocracy ; but even then, it was a liberty confined to individuals, not extending to the community at large ; effecting therefore partial superiority, and not general benefit. The feudal aristocracy was destroyed by

Richelieu, and the separate sovereignties were consolidated into one entire mass.

During 175 years (from 1614 to 1789,) France had been without even the appearance of a legislative voice. Every thing was under the controul of a government habitually corrupt and cruel. The people were often depressed by ignorance, by poverty, and extortion. The men of wealth and distinction were purchased either by courtly honours, or presents and pensions, or by a lavish waste of the public revenue. They were exempted in some sort from the duty of contributing to the revenue, which was endeavoured to be exclusively wrung from the grasp of the poor, the weak, and the laborious. They were prevailed upon to countenance, by being admitted into a partnership of the use of arbitrary imprisonment, punishment without an accusation and without a hearing, and the confinement of the Bastile.

The old government of France was, no doubt, liable to these and other objections,

both in its principles and practice. In the reigns of Louis XIV. and XV. it was a very arbitrary and oppressive system. Its defects appeared the more striking to a Briton, when contrasted with the admirable constitution which he himself enjoyed. There is not a more common source of error, in reasoning on subjects of polity, than an opinion that the same government may answer equally well among people of different characters, or that what would be evil to one nation must be so to another. The most profound political philosopher of antiquity bestows a considerable portion of his *Treatise on Politics* in shewing the absurdity of any general or abstract form of government as applicable to every case, and the necessity of adapting constitutions to the existing circumstances. A greater or less degree of restraint is necessary, according to the knowledge and dispositions of a nation as well as an individual. Britons, in judging of the French Government, did not accurately apply the consideration of national character. It would be, they knew, a very bad and intolerable govern-

ment in Britain ; therefore they concluded it must be a very bad and intolerable government for France. They had not investigated the French mind, sentiments, and habits, so deeply as to see that our neighbours in the aggregate required a much closer curb than we.

At the same time it must be admitted, that the old system of France was much more arbitrary than was necessary, and that the power was frequently intrusted to persons who were guilty of the grossest abuses ; and though the administration of Louis XVI. was mild and liberal, yet the tenure of their rights continued the same to his subjects. It depended on the will of an individual. Nor was it unreasonable to propose that there should be a controul over the monarchical and aristocratical part as well as over the democratical.

Besides the nature of the government, other causes, some more remote and general, some more immediate and special, contributed

to prepare and excite the French to seek a change. Learning becoming daily more prevalent in Europe, and having been fostered in France by the ostentatious vanity of Louis XIV. though limited, during his reign, to subjects of taste and sentiment, or to physics, yet soon extended to those of moral philosophy and politics; discussions by no means favourable to the theoretical approbation of such a government as that of France, however prudence might dictate a practical acquiescence. These speculations took a more abstract and metaphysical form than in countries where liberty was a *practical benefit*; probably, because at the time it was impossible to have their *practical effect* experimentally ascertained. As learning, in general, increased, these disquisitions in that metaphysical mode became common in France, but hitherto only among scholars. Their connection with America afterwards disseminated principles of Freedom among the people in general. The enormous expences incurred by her projects of aggrandizement, the profligacy of her court, and the profu-

sion of her ministers, had thrown the finances of France into the greatest embarrassment. The inferiority of the revenue to the expenditure was such as to announce approaching bankruptcy, unless most speedy means were employed to bring the expence within the income. Calonne advised the calling of the Notables. The Notables found an assembly of the States necessary. Calonne was banished ; Neckar was appointed Minister of Finance. Letters were issued for convoking the States-General. The spirit of liberty becoming more fervid from the heat of elections, the action and re-action of opinion, sentiment, and sympathy, the States assembled. It was proposed by Government that they should meet in three different chambers, according to ancient usage. The people apprehended, that if they were in separate bodies, the clergy and nobility might controul the third estate ; and as they had resolved, not merely to make financial regulations, but to procure the redress of grievances, they conceived that the two privileged orders, from dependence on the Court, and for

the preservation of their own immunities, would unite in over-ruling the popular voice. They therefore insisted that the States-General should consist of one body only, and regulations be established according to the majority of votes. The Court refused—the Third Estate persisted, and met as a National Assembly, inviting the nobles and clergy to join them as individual members. The King ordered them to separate; it was replied, The Nation assembled has no ORDERS to receive. Troops were summoned by the Court to Paris, and surrounded the capital. The people of Paris took the side of the national representatives; the army caught the prevailing feelings, the Bastile was destroyed, and the old government fell.

The notion, that a change from an oppressive and corrupt system must be good, was a natural, but not necessarily a wise conclusion. The alteration was or was not a proper subject of rejoicing to the lovers of mankind, according to the probability that the effect would be well regulated liberty,

order, and happiness. Britons in general were delighted * with the overthrow of a fabric so contrary to that liberty which they themselves enjoyed. This was a natural and a benevolent pleasure ; but as it is profoundly remarked in the masterly investigation of Burke's ' REGICIDE PEACE' in the Monthly Review of November 1796, ' The great danger to a virtuous man arises from the excess of his virtuous propensities themselves. It is his duty to preserve, with the most religious care, a just balance among all the natural sentiments and moral principles of his character ; and to watch with the utmost vigilance the first symptom of any tendency to excess, in any single principle or pas-

* Every reader must remember the joy that pervaded all ranks in this country on hearing that the Third Estate had carried its point, and even that the Bastille was destroyed. I remember, some weeks before that period, I happened to be at the Little Theatre, when an actor, making some common place observation, from the *Trip to Margate*, on the frivolity of the French, made the following addition, '*yet I do admire them for their present efforts in favour of liberty.*' There was a loud clapping, and even huzzaing, from every corner of the house, for near half an hour.

sion. He must never forget the maxim of ancient wisdom, '*omnes virtutes mediocritate quadam esse moderatas.*' If he abandon himself to the guidance of any single principle, it matters not whether it be a zeal for the glory of God, or for the salvation of men; for the quiet of society, or for the establishment of liberty; for Popery or Calvinism; for Monarchy or for Democracy; it is sure equally to drown the voice of reason, to silence the feelings of nature, to dishonour his own character, and (if he be armed with power) to vex and scourge the human race.' The love of liberty, a sentiment in itself so noble, and so congenial to the feelings of an Englishman, was so powerful as to conquer other sentiments: admiration of the exertions which overthrew the despotism, absorbed horror for the outrages, and detestation for the violence and injustice which soon marked the proceedings of its subverters, and impeded the consideration of the tendency of the new order of things.

While many approved of the French revolution as a triumph of liberty, without at-

tending closely to any of ITS DISTINGUISHING FEATURES, some, from considering certain peculiar characteristics of it, which coincided with their own notions, prized it the more. Many, admiring the constitution of England, conceived that the French revolution would generate a government similar to that which the English had acquired. Some, whose ideas of political establishments were formed from their own abstractions, much more than from experience, admired the French doctrines of the *Rights of Man*, which fell in with their own ideas on the principles and origin of CIVIL AND POLITICAL LIBERTY. They admired the French for declaring the equality of mankind, and making that principle the basis of government, instead of modifying it according to circumstances and expediency. Others, considering less the SOURCES of *political right than the* MODES of *intellectual process*, commended the legislators of France, for taking, as they said, *reason*, instead of *authority* and *example*, for their guide. ‘It was time (one very able writer remarked, and another repeated) that legislators, instead of

that narrow and dastardly *coasting* which never ventures to lose sight of usage and precedent, should, guided by the *polarity* of reason, hazard a bolder navigation, and discover, in unexplored regions, the treasure of public felicity.' These were the views of men of much more genius, speculative philosophy, and general learning, than conversancy with practical affairs. While men of systematic understandings, habituated to speculations, approved of processes of mind conformable to their own, men, whose classical erudition had a greater influence in forming their opinions than experience and reason, and who judged of political equity and wisdom more from the practice of the ancient republics than from general history and investigation of mind, compared with the circumstances of the case, admired what they conceived to be approaches to the democratic spirit which they found arrayed in so beautiful colours by their favourite orators and poets. Statesmen of high rank, and of the highest talents, venerating liberty in general; presuming French liberty would render its votaries happy; imputing

the aggressions of France on this country and other nations to the corrupt ambition of a court ; and anticipating tranquillity from her renovated state, rejoiced at a change that foreboded peace to Britain and to Europe.*

The first avowed censurers of the French revolution were men whose talents and characters did not give much authority to their opinions, and they had not discovered strong arguments. The ablest men on the side of Administration abstained from delivering any opinion concerning the internal proceedings of a foreign state, which had not then interfered with our's. Ability was chiefly in support of the change among our neighbours, as far as opinions had been declared. While men of generous sentiments in Britain favoured the liberty of France ; while men of genius approved of what they conceived consonant to their own political theories, or habits of reasoning ; while sanguine statesmen prognosticated a new and

* See Fox's Speech on the Army Estimates, Feb. 1790.

happy order of things to the nations whose interests were the subjects of their thoughts, wisdom attempted to correct the errors and restrain the excesses of benevolent sentiments, to prevent the prevalence of partial theories, to make not metaphysics, but experience the guide to judgment ; and to teach men, from the whole circumstances of the case, what judgment to form.

Burke, as the friend of mankind, had reprobated the old government of France : although he thought it in the reign of Louis the Sixteenth softened in its exercise by the progress of civilization, and the personal character of the monarch, still he deemed the welfare of the people to rest on an unstable basis, and to require very considerable reform before it could be a good government. But esteeming arbitrary power a great evil, he knew that unwise efforts to shake it off might produce greater calamities. Respecting the spirit of liberty, as, when well directed and regulated, a means of human happiness, his respect for it in every indi-

vidual case was proportionate to its probable tendency to produce that end, where he had not actual experience to ascertain its effects. From principle and habit, *guided by* EXPERIENCE in his judgments and conduct, he considered liberty as a matter of moral enjoyment, and not of metaphysical disquisition. It was not merely the possession of it that constituted it a blessing, but the possession of it in such a degree, and with such regulations, as could make it subsidiary to virtue and happiness, without being able to produce vice and misery. Its operation as a blessing or a curse depended, he thought, partly on its intrinsic nature, partly on the character of its subjects, and partly on more extrinsic causes. He uniformly controverted those doctrines of the *Rights of Man*, which would allow the same degree of liberty to all persons and in all circumstances. Like Livy, he did not think a horde of barbarians equally fitted for the contests of freedom, as men in a more advanced state of knowledge and civilization. Neither did he conceive that every one state, though refined, was

equally fit for the beneficial exercise of liberty, as every other state not more refined. The controul, he thought, must be strong in the direct ratio of passion, as well as the inverse of knowledge and reason. ‘ I DO NOT (he said) REJOICE TO HEAR THAT MEN MAY DO WHAT THEY PLEASE, UNLESS I KNOW WHAT IT PLEASES THEM TO DO.’ And in another place, ‘ SOCIETY CANNOT EXIST UNLESS A CONTROULING POWER UPON WILL AND APPETITE BE PLACED SOMEWHERE ; AND THE LESS OF IT THERE IS WITHIN, THE MORE THERE MUST BE WITHOUT. IT IS ORDAINED IN THE ETERNAL CONSTITUTION OF THINGS, THAT MEN OF INTEMPERATE MINDS CANNOT BE FREE. THEIR PASSIONS FORGE THEIR FETTERS.

Mr. Burke having long viewed with anxiety the new philosophy become fashionable in France, bestowed the most accurate attention on the designs of its votaries as they gradually unfolded themselves. In 1787 the noted Mr. Thomas Paine had been introduced to him by a letter from Mr. Henry

Lawrence, and was treated by Burke with the hospitality which he thought due to an American stranger so recommended. He was frequently a visitor at Beaconsfield, and then informed his host that he had entirely given up politics, and was devoting his attention to mechanical enquiries. He had a model of an iron bridge, which he wished to be seen by eminent characters of Mr. Burke's acquaintance: Burke introduced him to Mr. Windham, Lord Fitzwilliam, the Duke of Bedford, and, during a summer's excursion to Yorkshire, he went with him to Rotherham's original manufactory at Sheffield. Not long after he spent the day with him at Lord Fitzwilliam's.

At this time Paine continued to abstain from political discussions. The following winter he went over to France, and became deeply connected with the anti-monarchical partisans at Paris. Returning in 1788 to England, his discourse took a new turn. Calling frequently on Burke, he endeavoured to impress on him the views which he himself

had recently formed concerning French affairs. People in general, he asserted, did not know the change speedily about to take place in that country. The French, he averred, were determined to surpass every nation in liberty, and to establish a pure democracy. Mr. Burke saw that this was not an opinion resulting from Paine's penetration into principles and their probable effects, but from his knowledge of actually declared intentions. He was therefore the more certain that attempts would be made to carry these designs into effect. Paine prophesied that the same species of liberty would be extended to other countries ; and, led away by his wishes, fancied all Europe would unite in overturning monarchy. Whether of himself, or from the suggestion of his French friends, Paine expressed his wishes that the British Opposition should coincide in the republican views, and *use parliamentary reform as the pretext*. Burke answered to him, ' Do you mean to propose that I, who have all my life fought for the

constitution, should devote the wretched remains of my days to conspire its destruction? Do not you know that I have always opposed the things called reform; to be sure, because I did not think them reform?' Paine, seeing Burke totally averse to his projects, forbore repetition. Burke, however, saw that Paine was well acquainted with the designs of the innovators; and from him learned many important facts, all tending to make a totally different impression on philosophic wisdom from that which they made on turbulent violence. The earliest particular information respecting the mischievous designs of the republican agitators communicated to Edmund Burke was by Thomas Paine.

Paine went to France early in 1789, and wrote several letters from Paris to Burke, explaining to him the schemes of the popular leaders. In one of these, dated July 11th, he copied a note just received from a distinguished American gentleman, at whose house the republican chiefs held their most confi-

dential meetings. ' The leaders (said the note) of the assembly surpass in patriotism ; they are resolved to set fire to the four corners of France, rather than not reduce their principles to practice, to the last iota. Do not fear the army, we have gained them.' Here we see Mr. Burke learned from Paine, not only that they were determined to overthrow the existing orders, but that they had provided the most effectual means by debauching the army from their duty. From Paine, indeed, he learned enough to render him inimical to the French revolution, even if his knowledge of it had been confined to the result of that person's communications. Paine left nothing in his power undone to show Mr. Burke how odious and destructive a system might be expected from the French revolution. These are facts which I did not know when I wrote the first edition. The evidence by which they are supported is such as to render their authenticity incontrovertible ; and it is certainly a singular circumstance in political biography, that so great a portion of Burke's dislike to the

French revolution originated in the narratives of Thomas Paine.

But in considering the French revolution, Burke's expansive mind did not view *parts* only, but the *WHOLE*. Had his consideration of it been partial, his sensibility might have been gratified by the emancipation of millions : but a sagacity, as penetrating as his views were comprehensive, had discovered to him the nature of those principles which guided the revolutionists, as well as the characters on which they were operating. The notions of liberty that were cherished by the French philosophy he knew to be speculative and visionary, and in no country to be reducible to salutary practice : that they proposed much less restraint than was necessary to govern any community of men, however small, such as men are known from experience to be : he knew also that the volatile, impetuous, and violent character of the French required, in so great a nation, much closer restraints than that of many other states. Infused into their liberty was another

ingredient, which tended to make it much worse than it would have been in itself. From the same philosophy from which they had derived their extravagant notions of freedom, they also received infidelity. Burke had, many years before, predicted that their joint operation, unless steadily guarded against, would overturn civil and religious establishments, and destroy all social order. This was the opinion which he had maintained of infidelity and speculative politics in general, in his *Vindication of Natural Society*, and in his *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*; and of French infidelity and speculative politics in particular, in his speech after returning from France in 1773, and in all his speeches and writings, whenever the occasion required his admonition. With religion he foresaw that morals would fall; and that instead of the old arbitrary government, which he thought might have been IMPROVED into a limited monarchy, at once combining religion, liberty, order, and virtue, a compound of impiety, anarchy, and wickedness would

be substituted. The composition of the National Assembly, the degradation of the nobility, the abolition of the orders, the confiscation of the property of the church, and many other acts, tended to confirm the opinion which he had formed. Much as he detested the outrages, he execrated the principles more; foreseeing, that in their unavoidable operation they would lead to much greater enormities. In the principles and details of the new constitution he did not expect either happiness, or even permanent existence. Uniformly inimical to metaphysics, as the instrument of intellect in planning conduct, * he, CONSISTENTLY WITH HIMSELF, reprobated the speculative doctrine of the *Rights of Man*. Conceiving that the end of government, the good of the community, was, as appeared from experience, best attained when power was entrusted to talents,

* See his *Speeches on American Taxation, on Conciliation with America, on allowing the Colonies to tax themselves by Representatives; Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*, and in his works, *passim*.

virtue, and property, * he disapproved of a system which permitted its exercise TO ALL MEN EQUALLY, *without any consideration of their fitness*. CONSISTENTLY WITH HIMSELF, he reprobated such a disposal of power.

The vicinity of France to England made him apprehensive lest the speculations of that country should make their way into this, and produce attempts against a constitution founded upon observation and experience, not upon visionary theories. The approbation manifested by many in this country, both of the principles and proceedings of the French revolutionists, increased his apprehension, and he took the first proper opportunity of endeavouring to point out the danger of encouraging the Gallic notions. An occasion offered itself, at the discussion of the Army Estimates for the year 1790.

* *Thoughts on the Discontents*; in his speeches and writings, *passim*.

Adverting to the revolution in France, Fox considered that event as a reason for rendering a smaller military establishment necessary on our part. 'The new form,' he said, 'that the government of France was likely to assume would, he was persuaded, make her a better neighbour, and less propense to hostility, than when she was subject to the cabal and intrigues of ambitious and interested statesmen.' The opinion, that the new order in France was likely to produce more happiness to the inhabitants and more tranquillity to adjoining states, especially to this country, seems to have been one of the principal causes that rendered this philanthropic and patriotic personage favourable to the French revolution. The anticipation of happiness to the French themselves seems to have arisen from the attention of his great mind being turned more to the general effects of liberty than to the contemplation of the particular characters of its new votaries ; and to the principles and views of its most active supporters, as manifested in their declarations and conduct. The anticipation of

tranquillity to other states, from the prevalence of freedom in France, even had there been nothing peculiar in the nature of that freedom and the habits and dispositions of its votaries, seems to have arisen more from theory than from the actual review of the history of free countries. Had the comprehensive and full mind of Fox called before him his own extensive knowledge of the actions of mankind, he would have immediately perceived that free nations have been as *propense to hostility* as the subjects of an arbitrary Prince ; and, as he himself will readily admit, to much more effect, because with much more energy. The reasonings of the great orator seem to be, on this subject, derived from abstract principles much more than experience. This was, indeed, the case with Mr. Sheridan and other eminent men friendly to the French revolution.

Burke soon after delivered his sentiments on the subject : entertaining the very highest opinion of the genius and wisdom of his

friend, he expressed his anxiety lest the approbation of the French by a man to whose authority so much weight was due, should be misunderstood to hold up the transactions in *that country* as a fit object of *our* imitation. After expressing his thorough conviction that nothing could be farther from the intentions of so able and uniformly patriotic a champion of the British constitution, he entered upon the merits of his arguments, and of the question from which they had arisen. Fully coinciding with Fox respecting the evils of the old despotism, and the dangers that accrued from it to this country, and concerning the wisdom of our ancestors in preventing its contagion, as well as their vigour in resisting its ambitious projects, he thought very differently of the tranquillity to neighbours and happiness to themselves, likely to ensue from the late proceedings of France. ‘ In the last age (he said) we had been in danger of being entangled, by the example of France, in the net of relentless despotism. Our present danger, from the model of a people whose

character knew no medium, was that of being led, through an admiration of successful fraud and violence, to imitate the excesses of an irrational, unprincipled, proscribing, confiscating, plundering, ferocious, bloody, and tyrannical democracy.' The ardent sensibility of Burke's mind often transported him, as I have repeatedly remarked, into very violent expressions. Impartial investigators, however, of his conduct will attend less to incidental warmth of language than to the series of opinion, relatively to its grounds; and of action, relatively to its causes and circumstances.

The more completely we examine Burke's intellectual operations and political exertions in detail, and the more full and accurate our induction of their principles is, the more clearly shall we see that his arguments and proceedings on the French revolution were on the same broad grounds as in the former parts of his life. I do not hesitate to say, that the very same process of understanding produced opposition to the ministerial plans

respecting America and reprobation of the French principles of legislation ; and I refer to his chief writings and speeches on both for the proof of my assertion. His reasoning during the American contest was this :— You have derived great benefit from the colonies under the constitution by which they have been hitherto managed : in attempting to establish a different constitution, you are neither sure of the practicability nor of the effect.

His reasoning on the principle of the French revolution was :—They have before them a balance of estates, a controul of powers, into which their own, after the Assembly of the States-General, might have been easily modelled, and from which a great share of actual liberty and happiness has been derived. BE GUIDED BY EXPERIENCE, AND NOT BY UNTRIED THEORIES. He was apprehensive of the consequences of the French system to the constitution of England. As in his *Vindication of Natural Society*, he had shewn the probable effects of the

false philosophy of Bolingbroke; and on his return from France, of that of Helvetius, Voltaire, and Rousseau, to social order; he had, in his Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, animadverted on the political speculations then disseminated in this country, and had reprobated the reasoning of men, who pursued the same object with himself, because they argued from ideal notions of the *Rights of Man*. He had perceived the notions spreading, not only among those who had talents and learning for such disquisitions,* but into clubs and societies, of which many of the members could not be competent judges of metaphysics, and might be led by wild and misunderstood theories to the most speculatively erroneous and practically hurtful opinions and sentiments concerning the constitution of this country. He argued from the same principle respecting this country, that he had done in the case of America, and was doing in the case of France:—TRUST NOT UNTRIED SPECULA-

* Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley.

TIONS: ADHERE TO THE LESSONS OF EXPERIENCE. This was the corner-stone of his political reasoning. HE, AT THAT VERY EARLY STAGE OF IT, WITH SAGACITY ALMOST PROPHETIC, DISCOVERED, in its operations, principles, and spirit, a tendency to THOSE VERY EFFECTS NOW KNOWN TO EUROPE BY DIREFUL EXPERIENCE. ' They laid the axe to the root of property. They made and recorded a sort of institute and digest of anarchy, called the *Rights of Man*. Their conduct was marked by a savage and unfeeling barbarity. They had no other system than a determination to destroy all order, subvert all arrangement, and reduce every rank and description of men to one level. Their signal of attack was the warwhoop; their liberty was licentiousness, and their religion atheism.' Burke concluded this first public discussion on the French revolution with a very high and just eulogium on the genius and dispositions of his friend Fox. It was in reply to this speech that Fox, after expressing his esteem and veneration for Burke, declared, ' that if he were to put all

the political information that he had gained from books, all that he had learned from science, or that the knowledge of the world and its affairs had taught him, into one scale; and the improvement he had derived from Mr. Burke's conversation and instruction into the other; the latter would preponderate.' Still, however, he could not agree with the opinion of his friend respecting the French revolution, at which he rejoiced, as an emancipation from despotism. He declared himself as much an enemy to democratical despotism, as to aristocratical or monarchical; but he did not apprehend that the new constitution of France would degenerate into tyranny of any sort. 'He was (he said) a friend only to a mixed government like our own, in which, if the aristocracy, or indeed any of the three branches, were destroyed, the good effects of the whole, and the happiness derived under it, would, in his mind, be at an end.'

Sheridan expressed his disapprobation of the remarks and reasonings of Burke on this

subject much more strongly than Fox had done. He thought them quite inconsistent with the general principles and conduct of so constant and powerful a friend of liberty ; and one who so highly valued the British government and revolution. Indignation and abhorrence of the revolution in France he thought not consonant with the admiration of that of England. Detesting the cruelties that had been committed, he imputed them to the natural resentment of a populace for long suffered and long felt oppression. He praised the National Assembly as the dispensers of good to their own country and other nations. ‘The National Assembly (he said) had exerted a firmness and perseverance, hitherto unexampled, that had secured the liberty of France, and vindicated the cause of mankind. What action of theirs authorised the appellation of a bloody, ferocious, and tyrannical democracy ?’ Burke perceiving Sheridan’s view of affairs in France to be totally different from his, disapproving particularly of the opinion, that there was a resemblance between the principles of the

revolutions in France and in England, and thinking his friend's construction of his observations uncandid, declared, that Mr. Sheridan and he were from that moment separated for ever in politics. ' Mr. Sheridan (he said) has sacrificed my friendship in exchange for the applause of clubs and associations: I assure him he will find the acquisition too insignificant to be worth the price at which it is purchased.'

With a mind, from such a range of knowledge, and such powers of investigation and induction, so principled, as he possessed, Burke had, from the beginning, betaken himself to consider the series of the French proceedings; and to procure from every quarter such information as could enable him to understand the several parts, and comprehend the whole. The accurate Editor of his Posthumous Works informs us, that ' he desired all persons of his acquaintance, who were going to Paris (and curiosity attracted many) to bring him whatever they could collect, of the greatest circulation,

both on the one side and the other. It was with this view that he corresponded with Thomas Paine, as I have already mentioned. He had not only many correspondents among the English and Americans residing in France, but also among the natives, to whom, as well as to other foreigners, he had always done the honours of this country, as far as his means would permit him, with liberal hospitality. Among others, he received letters, endeavouring to trick out the events of the revolution in the most gaudy colouring, from Mr. Christie, and Baron Cloots, afterwards better known by the name of Anacharsis. It was in answer to a letter of this kind, from a French gentleman, that he wrote his celebrated "Reflexions."

The sentiments and opinions declared in the House of Commons by Messrs. Fox and Sheridan induced Burke 'to enlarge his *Reflexions* from the first sketch,' and more closely to contemplate its probable influence on British minds. Dr. Price's Sermon, preached some months before, and then pub-

lished, appeared to him to contain principles very different from those which had established and preserved our constitution ; and to praise certain parts of the French proceedings on grounds which, if admitted in this country, he thought would tend to overturn the existing polity. He now, therefore, viewed the French system not only as likely to affect those immediately within the sphere of its operation, but as likely to be held up by its votaries and admirers as a model for this country. Farther additions were successively made, as the French proceedings and plans more completely unfolded their principles and spirit. The work was published in October 1790.

A subject more momentous than that which now occupied this extraordinary mind cannot well be conceived,—whether a total political change in the situation of twenty-five millions of men was likely to produce happiness or misery to themselves, and to other nations? Such an enquiry was made by a man who grasped every important sub-

ject of his thoughts in all its relations, comprehended the detail of acts, the existing situations, the display of characters, the established measures of judgment and principles of action, intellectual processes and moral rules. These were the GRAND PREMISES from which he undertook to deduce his conclusion, that the French revolution was, and would be, an enormous evil to mankind. The ingenious and profound author of the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, who seems to have made the operations of intellect a peculiar study, speaking of experience, observes that there is an experience of case, and an experience of principle. Both these combined to form the ground-work of Burke's reasoning. He considered the particular proceedings of the French revolutionists: from comparing the variety of particulars, he endeavoured to ascertain their general character; and also to investigate the causes both of the proceedings and the character. In this process of things, history, or the EXPERIENCE OF FACT, was the guide which he

endeavoured to follow. He was perfectly acquainted with the constitution and operations of the understanding and affections; knew what directions of them were or were not favourable to the accomplishment of their best ends—the discovery of truth, the promotion of virtue, and the performance of duty. He investigated the principles of reasoning and of morality which guided the heads and hearts of the revolutionists. In this he rose TO EXPERIENCE OF LAW; to the science of human nature. Solicitous about the happiness of France, but still more anxious about the happiness of Britain, he takes the new system into consideration, as it affects the one, and may affect both. In the principles of political reasoning, *in the canons of philosophy*, admitted by the revolutionists, there appeared to him a fundamental defect so important, that no superstructure, raised on such a basis, could stand. This was, in all public concerns, THE TOTAL REJECTION OF EXPERIENCE AS A GUIDE TO JUDGMENT AND TO CONDUCT. In all regulations for the public good, they

commit the whole to the mercy of untried speculations: they abandon the dearest interests of the public to loose theories: they despise experience, as the wisdom of unlettered men.' Thoroughly master of civil and political history, viewing cause and effect in the modes of reasoning, of conduct, and of government which he had contemplated, he conceived that, in expecting extravagant and absurd inferences, wild and noxious conduct, from THE REJECTION OF EXPERIENCE, he DREW A JUST CONCLUSION. *Habituated himself to take experience for his guide* in political disquisitions, he at least, in doing so, proceeded CONSISTENTLY. It was not only the adoption in general of untried speculation which he thought pernicious, but the individual speculation which they substituted for experience. ' They have *the rights of man*. Against these there can be no proscription, against these no agreement is binding; these admit no temperament and no compromise; any thing withheld from their full demand is so much of fraud and injustice. The objections of

these speculatists, if its forms do not quadrate with their theories, are as valid against an old and beneficent government as against the most violent tyranny and the greatest usurpation.' This idea of the rights of man, Burke saw, arose partly from confusion of terms, and partly from erroneous speculation. If it was pretended that all men have an equal right to govern, the answer to this is, that government is a matter of convention, an agreement for the purpose of obtaining a specific end, the aggregate advantage of the parties. 'Prior to convention, (says the profound inquirer into "the Principles of Moral and Political Science" *) every one has a right to govern himself, but *not to govern any one else*. THE GOVERNMENT OF OTHERS, then, *prior to convention*, IS NOT MATTER OF RIGHT TO ANY ONE, although to have government, and this purged of every person incapable or unworthy of the trust, IS MATTER OF EX-

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* Vol. ii. p. 471, on the exercise of legislative power.

OBEDIENCE to every one. The right is the creature of expediency, in every individual case; and in general classes, it is right that they should govern who are most fit for answering the end of government,—the promotion of the general good of the conventional society. All men are not equally fit for governing: it is, therefore, not equally right that all men should govern. Rejecting the rights of man, as in that abstract unqualified form, and applicable to every possible case, the foundation of just government, he delivers his sentiments on the real rights of men, as ascertained by the principles and circumstances of civil society. I shall quote this part of the work at considerable length, as it collects into one whole his opinions, reasonings, and principles, concerning the foundation, rights, and duties of legitimate government.

‘Far am I from denying in theory; full as far is my heart from withholding in practice, (if I were of power to give or to withhold) the *real* rights of men. In denying

their false claims of right, I do not mean to injure those which are real, and such as their pretended rights would totally destroy. If civil society be made for the advantage of man, all the advantages for which it is made become his right ; it is an institution of beneficence, and law itself is only beneficence acting by rule. Men have a right to live by that rule ; they have a right to justice as between their fellows, whether their fellows are in politic function or in ordinary occupation. They have a right to the fruits of their industry, and to the means of making their industry fruitful. They have a right to the acquisitions of their parents, to the nourishment and improvement of their offspring ; to instruction in life and consolation in death. - Whatever each man can separately do without trespassing upon others, he has a right to do for himself ; and he has a right to a fair portion of all which society, with all its combinations of skill and force, can do in his favour. In this partnership all men have equal rights, but not to equal things. He

that has but five shillings in the partnership has as good a right to it as he that has five hundred has to his larger proportion ; but he has not a right to an equal dividend in the product of the joint estate ; and as to the share of power, authority, and direction which each individual ought to have in the management of the state, that I must deny to be amongst the direct original rights of man in civil society ; for I have in my contemplation the civil social man, and no other. It is a thing to be settled by convention.

‘ If civil society be the offspring of convention, that convention must be its law. That convention must limit and modify all the descriptions of constitution which are formed under it. Every sort of legislative, judicial, or executory power, are its creatures. They can have no being in any other state of things ; and how can any man claim, under the conventions of civil society, rights which do not so much as suppose its existence ?

Government is not made in virtue of natural rights, which may and do exist in total independence of it ; and exist in much greater clearness, and in a much greater degree of abstract perfection: but their abstract perfection is their practical defect. By having a right to every thing, they want every thing. Government is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human wants. Men have a right that these wants should be provided for by this wisdom. Among these wants is to be reckoned the want, out of civil society, of a sufficient restraint upon their passions. Society requires not only that the passions of individuals should be subjected, but that, even in the mass and body as well as in the individuals, the inclinations of men should frequently be thwarted, their will controlled, and their passions brought into subjection. This can only be done by a power out of themselves ; and not, in the exercise of its function, subject to that will and to those passions which it is its office to bridle and to subdue. In this sense the

restraints on men, as well as their liberties, are to be reckoned among their rights. But as the liberties and the restrictions vary with times and circumstances, and admit of infinite modifications, they cannot be settled upon any abstract rule; and nothing is so foolish as to discuss them upon that principle.

X In this passage, containing what may be called the POLITICAL CREED OF EDMUND BURKE, we might refer to those who have most minutely studied and completely comprehended his antecedent works, whether there is in it any sentiment or expression INCONSISTENT with his former opinions. To the contemplators of the British constitution it may be referred, to determine whether there be any thing in Burke's articles of political faith contrary to its principles and regulations. To those conversant with the principles of government in general we may apply, to point out *what there is in these notions* CONTRARY TO A WELL REGULATED LIBERTY; to a polity adapted to the pro-

motion of the general good. Assertions, that his publication in general, or any series of arguments in it, were inimical either to the civil rights of man, or to the British constitution, are mere empty sounds until established by proof.

Guided by the same experience, which rested government upon expediency instead of abstract rights, he inquires into those principles which tend most powerfully to promote its object; the security and happiness of the community. To controul the workings of passion, he, from his acquaintance with the mind of man, and with the actions of men in domestic, social, civil, and political relations, had formed a conclusion that there was not so powerful a check as religion. Religion, he knew, had, in all ages and countries, in proportion to its being well understood and followed, tended to soften barbarism, restrain wickedness, meliorate the affections, and promote happiness. A principle of so beneficial operation, he considered it to be the indispensable

duty of lawgivers to encourage ; and, from the experienced proportion of happiness to the proportion in which it existed in individuals or societies, he inferred, that wherever this principle was wanting the consequence would be misery. From the sources of the French revolution, into which great draughts of infidelity had been studiously infused, he had anticipated the prevalence of irreligion. From contemplating the actual conduct of the revolutionists, he found that what he had expected had come to pass,—that impiety had prevailed, almost to atheism. From their want of religion he augured ill of their future virtue and happiness. I do not say that Burke reasoned rightly in this case ; but that this was the process of his reasoning. If it can be proved, in contradiction to what Burke and many others have asserted concerning their irreligion, that the French revolutionists were very religious men, then must it be allowed that he was wrong as to fact. If any one will prove, from history and the constitution of human nature, that either

individuals or nations may do as well without religion as with it, then it must be conceded that he was wrong in his general principle.

✕ Considering religion as the most weighty counterpoise to violent or vicious passion, he infers, that it is most necessary in those governments in which passion is most likely to prevail. In Eastern despotisms, where the vicious passions of a few individuals, for want of political restraint, would be apt to reign without controul, the salutary effects of religious restraint are manifest. Under governments in which the people have a large share of the power, he thought that there must be a great aggregate of violent passion, and therefore a proportionable quantity of religion even politically necessary. Convinced of the utility and indeed the necessity of religion to the well-being of a state, he considered such means as were subsidiary to it as proper to be inculcated. These, reasoning in his usual way of practical wisdom, he concluded to

be indefinable in any abstract proposition, and that they must be accommodated to particular circumstances, degrees of knowledge, and habits of thinking. Religion he considered as cherished by national establishments, which should be on the whole judiciously constituted, even though liable to some objections. The effects of religion, supported by an ecclesiastical establishment accommodated to different conditions and circumstances of men, he illustrates from the state of England, as an example which the French, by the correction of their own orders, might have followed; and a warning to the English by what to abide: and perhaps in no writings is there to be found a more philosophical and profound view, though like all useful philosophy, simple and intelligible, of the effects of different gradations of spiritual teachers to different ranks in society. ‘The people of England,’ he said, ‘know how little influence the teachers of religion are likely to have with the wealthy and powerful of long standing; and how much less with the newly fortu-

nate, if they appear in a manner no way assorted to those with whom they must associate, and over whom they must even exercise, in some cases, something like an authority. What must they think of that body of teachers, if they see it in no part above the establishment of their domestic servants? If the poverty were voluntary, there might be some difference. Strong instances of self-denial operate powerfully on our minds; and a man who has no wants has obtained great freedom and firmness, and even dignity. But as the mass of any description of men are but men, and their poverty cannot be voluntary, that disrespect which attends upon all lay poverty, will not depart from the ecclesiastical. Our provident constitution has therefore taken care that those who are to instruct presumptuous ignorance, those who are to be censors over insolent vice, should neither incur their contempt, nor live upon their alms; nor will it tempt the rich to a neglect of the true medicine of their minds.' This was the reasoning of expanded and practical

wisdom, considering not what might be necessary for men, if they thought and acted always according to reason, (such men experienced wisdom does not know) but for men with the infirmities, imperfections, and erroneous criteria of judgment, which are generally found in life. He does not assert that religion is abstractly and intrinsically better for being impressed by persons of a certain external appearance and situation, but that it is more impressive on certain ranks on account of these adventitious circumstances; and that therefore the gradation is useful. Religion, he concludes, has been and is a most beneficial sentiment, even when mixed with some ingredients not in the abstract consonant to reason. Sentiments and principles of every sort partake of the cast and character of the mind in which they exist. ‘Superstition,’ he says, ‘is the religion of feeble minds.’ He therefore would regulate it, rather than proscribe it; and disapproves of the violent proceedings of the French against men, merely because they were superstitious. To

a disregard for religion he imputes the confiscation of the church lands ; because, if it had been from the necessity of the state, there could be no reason for a general seizure of the property of any class of individuals ; the want ought to be supplied by an equal contribution from all. Taking the reports of the popular Minister as his documents, he does not admit that the necessity did exist. A partial proscription, either where there was no want, or a want affecting the members of the state generally, he imputed to a dislike of the proscribed class. Besides its actual injustice, he saw that the degradation of the clergy consequent on this seizure of their property would, in the natural course of sentiments, lessen the influence of their instructions, by making them considered as mere hirelings of the state. This reduction of the clergy, combining with the known sentiments of the philosophers, whose writings had been so instrumental to the revolution, he deduced from a design to abolish the Christian religion. ‘ It seems to me,’ he

said, ‘ that this new ecclesiastical establishment is intended only to be temporary, and preparatory to the utter abolition, under any of its forms, of the Christian religion, whenever the minds of men are prepared for this last stroke against it, by the accomplishment of the plan for bringing its ministers into universal contempt.’ The confiscation of church property is imputed by Burke to a design formed by the French men of letters to abolish the Christian religion. ‘ The literary cabal,’ he says, ‘ had, some years ago, formed something like a regular plan for the destruction of the Christian religion. This object they pursued with a degree of zeal which hitherto had been discovered only in the propagators of some system of piety. What was not to be done towards their great end, by any direct or immediate act, might be wrought by a longer process, through the medium of opinion. To command that opinion, the first step is to establish a dominion over those who direct it. They contrived to possess themselves, with great method and

perseverance, of all the avenues to literary fame. Many of them indeed stood high in the ranks of literature and science. These atheistical fathers have a bigotry of their own ; and they have learnt to talk against monks with the spirit of a monk. But in some things they are men of the world. The resources of intrigue are called in to supply the defects of argument and wit. To their system of literary monopoly was joined an unremitting industry to blacken and discredit, in every way and by every means, all those who did not hold to their faction. To those who have observed the spirit of their conduct, it has long been clear that nothing was wanted but the power of carrying the intolerance of the tongue and of the pen into a prosecution which would strike at property, liberty, and life.' Whether Voltaire, and other philosophers and literary men of France, intended to overturn the Christian religion, their writings and conduct had evidently that tendency ; and where there is, in the conduct of men of talents or even men of

common understanding, a direct and constant tendency to any object, intention may be very fairly inferred. After investigating the intellectual and moral principles by which the French were directed, estimating, from history and the constitution of the human mind, their tendency, and shewing their effects in the proscription of property without any evidence of delinquency, he proceeds to the policy of the new French government in its provisions for strength and security. He considers the organization of the new legislative, executive, judicial, military, and financial establishments adopted by the National Assembly, and finding the same predilection for untried theory in their principle, the same inconsistency and inefficiency in their details, infers that they will neither be permanent, nor answer their purpose while they last.

Thus did Burke, reasoning from EXPERIENCE, an experience comprising the particular state and proceedings of France, the history of mankind, and the constitution,

moral and intellectual, of the human mind, conclude that a revolution, in its acts and principles so contrary to the lessons of that great beneficial TEACHER, would produce, as it was then producing, disorder, injustice, and misery. When it shall be proved that his deductions from particular fact, general history, and human nature, are not justified by the premises, then it must be conceded that his REFLEXIONS on the Revolution of France were ill founded. When it shall be established that mankind or individual men, disregarding religion and property, in their moral estimates, and experience, in their intellectual conclusions, have attained order, virtue, and happiness, then may it be proved that Burke's reasoning was false and sophistical. But until that theory be confirmed by a legitimate induction, the REFLEXIONS OF BURKE, GROUNDED ON EXPERIENCE, MUST BE ADMITTED TO BE JUST. From the event, indeed, we might almost ascribe to him the GIFT OF PROPHECY. He has certainly displayed that degree of divination which arises from a thorough knowledge of

the nature and relations of man, and that can from causes anticipate effects. If we examine what Burke said would be the consequence, and compare it with what is the actual state of affairs, we may at least confidently assert that he has not been mistaken: we may even affirm that his predictions have not exaggerated the irreligion, anarchy, tyranny, and injustice which they anticipated. Such a system as Burke conceives to exist, and likely to exist, in France, producing, and likely to produce, fatal effects, he naturally reprobated as a model for the imitation of England. He thought it incumbent on him to dwell on this subject, as a disposition had been manifested to assimilate the French revolution of 1789 to the English of 1688. Dr. Price had, at the anniversary of our revolution, advanced, on the great event commemorated, concerning the tenure of the Crown, and other subjects of British polity, principles which Burke thought dangerous, especially when combined with not merely an approval of the French revolution, but an exulting joy at the degra-

dati^{on} of the Monarch and privileged orders, and an address of congratulation sent to the National Assembly, on the overthrow of their monarchical government.

Burke maintains, that one of the principal sources of the happiness which the British nation enjoys under its present constitution, is its habitual and general adherence to the dictates of experience ;—the practical avoidance of great innovations. In his illustration of this just and salutary doctrine, he, it must be owned, goes farther in the instance of the rights asserted at the revolution than history justifies, or indeed the great objects of his work required. The arguments which he adduced, fully established that the French revolution did not tend to the good of its votaries, even when compared with their own old despotism ; much more, that it was not a model for Britain to follow. It was, therefore, unnecessary to inquire what was the RIGHT of Britain, *in any supposeable case*, when it was obvious—what was EXPEDIENT in the existing state of things. This subject

leads him to the question of resistance, in which he shows himself a moderate, wise Whig! 'The revolution of 1688,' he says, 'was obtained by a just war; the only case in which any war, and much more a civil war, can be just,—necessity. The question (of resistance) is (like all other questions of state) a question of dispositions, and of means and probable consequences, rather than of positive rights. As it was not made for common abuses, so it is not to be agitated by common minds. The superlative line of demarcation, where obedience ought to end, and resistance must begin, is faint, obscure, and not easily defineable. It is not a single act, or a single event, which determines it. Government must be abused and deranged indeed, before it can be thought of, and the prospect of the future must be as bad as the experience of the past. When things are in that lamentable condition, the nature of the disease is to indicate the remedy to those whom nature has qualified to administer, in extremities, this critical, ambiguous, bitter potion to a

distempered state. Times, and occasions, ^x and provocations, will teach their own lessons. The wise will determine from the gravity of the case ; the irritable, from sensibility to oppressive, the high-minded, from disdain and indignation at abusive power, in unworthy hands ; the brave and bold, from the love of honourable danger in a generous cause : but with or without right, a revolution will be the very last resource of the thinking and the good.'

I have hitherto, in this work, endeavoured to estimate its character as an eviñtion of truth, an exertion of reasoning, and an operation of wisdom. As a display of genius it equals any production of the age, even any of Burke's own. ' Arguments (to use the words of by far the ablest of his literary opponents) every where dexterous and specious, sometimes grave and profound, clothed in the most rich and various imagery, and aided by the most pathetic and picturesque description, speak the opulence and the powers of that mind,

of which age has neither dimmed the discernment nor enfeebled the fancy, neither repressed the ardour, nor narrowed the range.' 'His subject is as extensive as political science—his allusions and excursions reach almost every region of human knowledge.' A most perspicacious critic gives the following striking account and just description of the ornamental portion of the publication.* 'In his ornament he is rich to profusion. His metaphors are drawn from every object in the creation, divine and human, natural and artificial, ancient and modern, recondite and familiar, sublime and grovelling, gross and refined. He ranges from the angels of heaven to the furies of hell; from the aeronaut, soaring above the clouds in his balloon, to the mole, nuzzling and burying himself in his mother earth; from the living grasshopper of the field, and from the cuckow of the air, to the stuffed birds and the dead mummy of the

* Monthly Review for November, 1790, p. 314, on Burke's *Reflexions*.

Museum ; from the wild orgies of Thrace to the savage processions of Onondaga ; from the organic molecu^{læ} of the metaphysician to the scales, weights, and ledger of the shopkeeper ; from the kettle of the magician, and the dark science of the hermetic adept, to the porridge-pot of the scullion, and the pickling and preserving knowledge of the experienced cook ; from the decent drapery, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, to the huge full-bottomed periwig of a bedizened monarch ; from the purity and delicacy of a Roman matron to the filth and nastiness of a village pig-stye ; from the sweet fragrance emitted by the bloom of a young, lovely, and beautiful female, in the morning of her days *decorating the borizon of life*, to the foul stench exhaling from the mental blotches and running sores of an old, rotten, ulcerated aristocrat. To antecedent and consequent, wit, humour, beauty, sublimity, and pathos, lend an aid not wanted for evi^ction of truth, but adding delight, admiration, and astonishment to instruction and wisdom. To collect in-

stances of these excellencies is easy, the difficulty in such abundance would be the selection:—

‘Copia judicium, sæpe morata, meum est.’

Perhaps there will not be found a happier instance of contemptuous exhibition than in the following passage, in which he warns his correspondent not to judge, from certain republican publications, of the opinions and sentiments generally prevalent in England. ‘The vanity, restlessness, petulance, and spirit of intrigue of several petty cabals, who attempt to hide their total want of consequence in bustle and noise, and puffing, and mutual quotation of each other, makes you imagine that our contemptuous neglect of their abilities is a mark of general acquiescence in their opinions. No such thing, I assure you. Because half a dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink, whilst thousands of great cattle, reposed beneath the shadow of the British oak, chew the cud, and are silent, pray do not imagine that

those who *make the noise* are the ONLY INHABITANTS of the field ; that, of course, they are many in number ; or that, after all, they are other than the little, shrivelled, meagre, hopping, though loud and troublesome insects of the hour.*

The description of the exulting joy displayed by an eminent Dissenter on the humiliation of the King of France, and the fall of the monarchy (a joy reasonable, if a rationally free and happy constitution appeared likely to result from the overthrow of despotism, but premature and groundless as the case actually stood) shews a force of comic humour, a brilliancy of witty allusion, a poignancy of satirical insinuation, seldom exceeded, or, indeed, equalled by any writer whose comic powers have been the exclusive sources of his fame.

* This inspires a juvenile warmth through his whole frame. His enthusiasm kindles as he advances ; and when he arrives at his pe-

* Reflexions, p. 126-7.

ration, it is in a full blaze. Then viewing, from the *pisgab* of his pulpit, the free, moral, happy, flourishing, and glorious state of France, as in a bird-eye landscape of a promised land, he breaks out into the following rapture;—

‘ What an eventful period is this ! I am *thankful* that I have lived to it ; I could almost say, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* I have lived to see a *diffusion* of knowledge, which has undermined superstition and error. I have lived to see *the rights of men* better understood than ever, and nations panting for liberty which seemed to have lost the idea of it. I have lived to see *thirty millions of people*, indignant and resolute, spurning at slavery, and demanding liberty with an irresistible voice. *Their King led in triumph, and an arbitrary Monarch surrendering himself to his subjects.*’

‘ Before I proceed further, I have to remark, that Dr. Price seems rather to over-

value the great acquisitions of light which he has obtained and diffused in this age. The last century appears to me to have been quite as much enlightened. It had, though in a different place, a triumph as memorable as that of Dr. Price, and some of the great preachers of that period partook of it as eagerly as he has done in the triumph of France. On the trial of the Rev. Hugh Peters for high treason, it was deposed, that when King Charles was brought to London for his trial, the Apostle of Liberty in that day conducted the *triumph*. ‘I saw,’ says the witness, ‘his Majesty in the coach with six horses, and Peters riding before the King *triumphing*.’ Dr. Price, when he talks as if he had made a discovery, only follows a precedent; for, after the commencement of the King’s trial, this precursor, the same Dr. Peters, concluding a long prayer at the royal chapel at Whitehall, (he had very triumphantly chosen his place) said, “I have prayed and preached these twenty years; and now I may say with old Simeon, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant*

depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." * 'Peters had not the fruits of his prayer; for he neither departed so soon as he wished, nor in peace. He became (what I heartily hope none of his followers may be in this country) himself a sacrifice to the triumph which he led as Pontiff.'

Often as it has been quoted, I cannot refrain from repeating the citation of that passage in which a most charming woman is described by the pen of taste and sensibility; a sensibility raised to the highest pitch by the misfortunes of its object.

'It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the Queen of France, then the Dauphiness, at Versailles; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in,—glittering like the morning

* State Trials, vol. ii. p. 360, 363.

star, full of life, and splendour, and joy. Oh! what a revolution! and what an heart must I have to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall! Little did I dream that, when she added titles of veneration to those of enthusiastic, distant, respectful love, she should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace concealed in that bosom; little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men, in a nation of men of honour and of cavaliers. I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult. But the age of chivalry is gone.'

The same all-grasping genius exhibits most striking examples of the pathetic, the terrible, the sublime. The following few lines appear to be the dictates of a prophetic spirit, at least of that prophetic spirit which marks his reasoning in general on the French revolution, as it did on the American war; the prescience which arises

from wisdom contemplating objects in all their circumstances and relations, and from cause inferring effect. Speaking of the French republic:—‘ In the present (form) it can hardly remain; but, before its final settlement, it may be obliged to pass, as one of our poets says, through great varieties of untried being, and in all its trans-migrations, to be purified by fire and blood.’ One who had not read Burke would think that such a description had proceeded from the actual survey of the violent and multiplied vicissitudes and revolutions of the French government, and its pernicious and bloody consequences to the civilized world, and not from anticipation.

★ Impartiality obliges me to acknowledge that in some subordinate parts of the REFLEXIONS, Burke’s imagination and feelings have carried him beyond the bounds of cool reflecting reason. His account of the virtues of the French noblesse appears exaggerated, at least as far as can be judged from the samples of them that we have had occasion

to see in this country. The same observation will, on the whole, apply also to their clergy, concerning whom the experience of this country can hardly justify an opinion, that they were very learned or able men *as a body*, although as such they are decent and inoffensive, and so far respectable. The exaggeration, however, of the imputed merit does not affect the justness of the argument. Men ought not to have been degraded merely because, as a class, they were neither distinguished for eminent wisdom or virtue, if, with a mediocrity of abilities and good dispositions, they could by certain regulations be made useful in their former rank, of which experience might shew the probability. There have been, and are, in free and well constituted governments, classes not distinguished by qualities of the head or heart, beyond classes somewhat lower, the aggregate of whose power, exertions, and influence, has a beneficial effect on the community at large. With regard to the clergy, their use as a body must be, and was great, even with

their ordinary attainments. Policy, therefore, required that they should be preserved in that situation of respect in which their use could have been the greatest; and justice required that there should be no confiscation where there was no delinquency. It was not necessary to magnify the characters of the French noblesse and clergy as a warning to England. Educated in a free country, with every spur to the exercise of unprejudiced reason, our nobility were much superior, AS A BODY, to those of France, (however contemptible some individuals may be) as from various causes, national and professional, are the clergy of Britain, AS A BODY, to those under the old government of France.

But though there may be too high colouring in some portions of this extraordinary performance, where is there to be met a work which so completely unfolded the principles of thought and action that guided and prompted the French revolutionists, which so accurately, minutely, and fully

predicted the consequences of such theory and practice, as - BURKE'S REFLEXIONS ON THE REVOLUTION OF FRANCE?

When this production made its appearance, it was by all celebrated as the effort of uncommon genius, although very different notions were entertained concerning its reasoning. By those who were enamoured of the French liberty, without considering *its peculiar nature, adjuncts, and effects*, the book was abused as a defence of arbitrary institutions. By those who are averse to untried theories, and resolve to adhere to establishments on the whole good, it was praised as the ablest vindication of the constitution, which experience, a surer guide than hypothesis, taught them to revere, and prompted them to love. The first public tribute of gratitude and praise bestowed upon it came from a very respectable and important part of our national establishment,—THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD. Many members of that learned body considering Burke's performance as not only an

admirable work of genius, but as a treasure of valuable principles, the most momentous to the friends of English liberty, loyalty, virtue, and religion, proposed that the University should confer the degree of LL.D. on its illustrious author. The following account of the proceedings on that subject are extracted from the Gentleman's Magazine for February 1791 :

‘ Mr. Urban, I have always thought it a valuable circumstance in your Magazine, that it has been from its commencement a register of the current literature of the times. From such original documents of the progress or variation in the public opinion respecting religion, taste, and politics, are collected the most interesting materials of literary history. I conceived, therefore, that whatever tends to mark the public opinion of a work so valuable, on so many accounts, as Mr. Burke's ‘ *Reflections*,’ would be acceptable to you. I have sent you the Oxford address to Mr. Burke, on the publication of his ‘ *Re-*

flexions,' together with Mr. Burke's answer. You are probably aware, that the Masters who signed the address, proposed to the heads of houses that a diploma degree of LL.D. might be conferred on Burke; and that the proposal was rejected, from an apprehension, as it has been said, that the degree would not have met with the *unanimous* votes of the members of convocation. However that might be, the degree was certainly not opposed by the heads of houses, from any disaffection to the cause which Mr. Burke had so nobly and patriotically defended. It was rejected by seven heads against six. For much the greater part of the rest of the University the following address will speak.

ADDRESS FROM THE RESIDENT GRADUATES IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EDMUND BURKE,

' We whose names are subscribed, resident graduates in the University of Oxford, request you to accept this respectful declaration of our sentiments, as a tribute which we are desirous of paying to splendid ta-

lents employed in the advancement of public good. We think it fit and becoming the friends of our church and state, to avow openly their obligations to those who distinguish themselves in the support of our approved establishments; and we judge it to be our especial duty to do this in seasons peculiarly marked by a spirit of rash and dangerous innovation. As members of an University, whose institutions embrace every useful and ornamental part of learning, we should esteem ourselves justified in making this address, if we had only to offer you our thanks for the valuable accession which the stock of our national literature has received by the publication of your important "Reflections." But we have higher objects of consideration, and nobler motives to gratitude: we are persuaded, that we consult the real and permanent interests of this place, when we acknowledge the eminent service rendered, both to our civil and religious constitution, by your able and disinterested vindication of their true principles; and we obey the yet more sacred obligation

to promote the cause of religion and morality, when we give this proof, that we honour the advocate by whom they are so eloquently and effectually defended.'

This address was conveyed to Mr. Burke by Mr. Windham, of Norfolk; through whom Mr. Burke returned his answer :

MR. BURKE'S LETTER TO MR. WINDHAM.

' MY DEAR SIR,

' The valuable present I received from the resident graduates in the University of Oxford becomes doubly acceptable by passing through your hands. Gentlemen so eminent for science, erudition, and virtue, and who possess the uncommon art of doing kind things in the kindest manner, would naturally choose a person qualified like themselves to convey their favours and distinctions to those whom they are inclined to honour. Be pleased to assure those learned gentlemen, that I am beyond measure happy in finding my well-meant endeavours well received by them; and I think my satis-

faction does not arise from motives merely selfish, because their declared approbation must be of the greatest importance in giving an effect (which without that sanction might well be wanting) to an humble attempt in favour of the cause of freedom, virtue, and order, united. This cause it is our common wish and our common interest to maintain; and it can hardly be maintained without securing on a solid foundation, and preserving in an uncorrupted purity, the noble establishments which the wisdom of our ancestors has formed, for giving permanency to those blessings which they have left to us as our best inheritance. We have all a concern in maintaining them all: but if all those, who are more particularly engaged in some of those establishments, and who have a peculiar trust in maintaining them, were wholly to decline all marks of their concurrence in opinion, it might give occasion to malicious people to suggest doubts, whether the representation I had given was really expressive of the sentiments of the people on those subjects. I am obliged to

those gentlemen for having removed the ground of those doubts.

‘ I have the honour to be, &c.

EDMUND BURKE.’

Of those who, from talents and knowledge, were competent judges of literary and political discussions, the Ministry and their friends, the greater number of the nobility and landed gentry, a considerable portion of monied men, some of the leaders of Opposition, most of the members of the Universities, most of the clergy, most gentlemen of the navy and army, a few of the professed men of letters, rather the smaller part of two of the learned professions, admirers of the constitution, for its experienced blessings, conceived the highest opinion of the reasoning and wisdom of Burke’s book. Of those who were not *competent judges*, great numbers praised it upon *trust*:—common courtiers, household troops, underlings of office, and many other servants or retainers of Government, whose employment and situation did not require ability and

learning, admirers of royalty merely for its trappings and appendages; the greater number of persons of fashion, their dependants, and imitators; in short, such as were the mere parrots of the informed and wise.

On the other hand,—of men of talents and knowledge, who, though they admired the execution, condemned the tendency of the REFLEXIONS, there were those of high speculative notions of liberty; the majority of Burke's former associates, the very ablest of them in the House of Commons, and some of the ablest in the House of Peers; the greater number of professed men of letters, who, from their habits of metaphysical disquisitions, often followed theory more than experience; men of the partial erudition which Grecian and Roman literature betows, who formed their opinions more from particular models than general principles and history; many of the legal and medical professions, a few of the clergy, a few of the nobility and gentry, a greater portion of the monied interest than of the

landed, dissenting preachers, metaphysical deists. Of those who were NOT *competent judges*, great numbers condemned Burke's REFLEXIONS upon trust:—retainers of Opposition, understrappers of letters, implicit believers of infidelity, school-masters, inferior, decaying, or ruined tradesmen and mechanics, debating-society orators, revolution club-men, declaimers at public meetings, in short, also, mere parrots of learning and ingenuity.

The first answer to Burke came from the able pen of Dr. Priestley. A considerable part of this publication was a vindication of Dr. Price's opinion concerning the source and tenure of monarchical power in England: the rest is on the happy effects to be expected from the glorious principles of the French revolution, from which Priestley forebodes the enlargement of liberty, the melioration of society, the increase of virtue and of happiness. As Priestley neither shewed, from history, nor from the constitution of the human mind, that these prin-

ciples, in their usual operation and consequence, tended to produce all those blessings, it is the less surprizing that the event was so totally contrary to his predictions.

But the answer to Burke, which produced the most important effects in these kingdoms, was the 'RIGHTS OF MAN,' by the noted *Thomas Paine*. Perhaps there never was a writer who more completely attained the art of *impressing* vulgar and undistinguishing minds. The plain perspicuity of his language, the force of his expressions, the directness of his efforts, wore so much the appearance of clear and strong reasoning (to those that judge from manner more than matter) that numbers, borne down by his bold assertions, supposed themselves convinced by his arguments.

The substance of his doctrine was peculiarly pleasing to the lower ranks. When mechanics and peasants were told that they were as fit for governing the country as any man in Parliament, the notion flattered

their vanity, pride, and ambition. While he had for the ignorant these notions of equality,* 'so agreeable to the populace,' he had additional charms, in metaphysical distinctions and definitions, to delight the half-learned with the idea, that when they were repeating his words, they were pouring forth philosophy. For them he had *inprescriptible rights, organization, general will, at-taint upon principle*, and many other phrases, from which his votaries thought themselves as much instructed as the under *Grave-digger* in Hamlet supposed himself from the learned distinctions of the upper. This mode of procedure it would be very unjust to impute to the want of powers of evincing truth, wherever truth was his object. He had, certainly, in his 'Crisis' and Common Sense' displayed most penetrating acuteness and great force of argument. It was not from weakness that he reasoned upon assumptions, nor from confusion of ideas that he

* See an instance of the same kind in Hume's History of the Reign of Richard II. speaking of John Ball.

made unintelligible definitions : it was from dexterous art, and a versatility of genius, accommodating itself to diversity of objects and persons, but adapting itself peculiarly to those classes who would believe themselves convinced when they were only persuaded.

It would be foreign to the purpose of this work to enter into the detail of Paine's '*Rights of Man*.' The amount of his theory is this : That no government is just, which is not actually, and has not been historically and originally, founded on what he calls the *Rights of Man*. He applies this general principle to existing governments, and finding that none of them is reconcilable to his notions of natural equality and the *rights of man*, except that of America and the new constitution of France, he proposes that all others shall be pulled down ; but first, and especially, what we call the Constitution, and he the usurpation, of England. England exhibits a polity by no means conformable to the ideas of

Thomas Paine. France he considers as approaching nearer to consummate perfection than America. One of the chief evils, contrary to this natural equality and *rights of man*, was the existence of artificial distinctions; such as rank, title, and corporate bodies. To level all distinction and rank, was one indispensable ingredient in every system established on these grounds. The inequalities subsisted to a great degree in Britain, as appeared from the King, the House of Peers, the House of Commons, the Universities, and the accumulation of estates through the absurd rule of hereditary succession. In France, great advances had been made in the levelling system, and greater were likely to be made: therefore England was a very bad government, and France a very good one, and likely to be still better. The English government, consequently, ought to be pulled down, and to be rebuilt upon the French model. Another reason for overturning the government of this country was, that it was a government of controul, and did not allow unre-

strained licentiousness to the populace, any more than to other classes ; therefore it was contrary to the *rights of man*. A third reason for pulling down the English system was, that *between seven and eight hundred years ago England had been conquered*. This defect in its origin was an argument paramount to expediency from its present state. Mr. Thomas Paine has not proved from history, that governments, founded on these levelling principles, have been conducive to the purposes of good establishments—the happiness of society : he has not proved, from the constitution of the human mind and experience of human nature, that men act better without CONTRAOL than with it ; and that there is an equality of capacity for government in all men ; an equality necessary to render their government expedient. His theory is founded on an assumption, and is not supported by proof. It is not only not conformable, but is contrary, to experience ; therefore it carries in it the grounds of disproof. Though inadmissible as a chain of reasoning, it certainly dis-

plays very great and varied and versatile ability. There is a strong sarcastic humour in it, which, to many readers, supplied the deficiency of the reasoning: jokes passed for arguments, ludicrous stories for lucid illustration; lively invective was received for energetic eloquence, bold assertion for unanswerable demonstration.

The societies and clubs, fast increasing in number and divisions, testified the highest approbation of Paine's '*Rights of Man*;' and very industriously, through their affiliations, spread cheap editions of it among the common people, in all parts of the kingdom; but especially in populous cities, towns, and villages. When we consider that *Paine reprobates the polity of this country, and advises the people to unite and subvert it*, and that the *Revolution and Constitutional Societies* in London, with affiliated clubs in other parts, *praised and* DISSEMINATED *these doctrines* among those who were most likely to swallow them, we can be at no great loss to comprehend the intention of the propagandists.

Wherever tendency is obvious in the habitual conduct of men having the use of their reason, design may be fairly inferred.

Meanwhile, Burke, having received an answer from the gentleman to whom he had written his letter, replied in a second, entitled 'A Letter to a Member of the National Assembly.'

After retouching several subjects that he had brought forward in his REFLEXIONS, he proceeded to examine the French system in its institutions and principles, with their effects on morals and manners. In his former treatise he had chiefly considered public and political consequences; in the present, he carries his view to private, social, and domestic happiness; and proves that their plans of education and civil regulations sprung from the same source of untried theory, and tended to the same disorder and misery. On the subject of juvenile tuition, he shews the extent of his knowledge, and the profoundness of his wisdom.

He reprobates the principles by the French system inculcated on youthful minds, the precepts taught, and the models exhibited. ' Their great problem is to find a substitute for all the principles which hitherto have been employed to regulate the human will and action. They find dispositions in the mind, of such force and quality, as may fit men, far better than the old morality, for the purposes of such a state as theirs, and may go much further in supporting their power, and destroying their enemies.' He illustrates the principles instilled concerning parental affection, marriage, and other principal sentiments and relations of man; and knowing that Rousseau was the chief model held up to the imitation of youth, whom they were enjoined, stimulated, and exhorted to copy, analyses his character, to ascertain the effects likely to result from following such an example. He also characterizes Voltaire, though with much less profound investigation than Rousseau; and Helvetius more generally than Voltaire.

The next publication of Burke on French affairs was the 'Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs.' Before this comes under consideration, it is necessary to recapitulate some parts of parliamentary history. In session 1769, after the discussion between him and Messrs. Fox and Sheridan, he had adhered uniformly to the sentiments he then avowed. He had opposed the repeal of the Test-Act, and a motion for a Reform in Parliament. Mr. Fox and he had still continued on terms of friendship, although they did not so frequently meet. In 1791 a bill was proposed for the formation of a constitution in Canada. In discussing it Burke entered on the general principles of legislation, considered the doctrine of the *rights of man*, proceeded to its offspring, the constitution of France, and expressed his conviction that there was a design formed in this country against its constitution.

After some members of the party had called Burke to order, Mr. Fox spoke. Mr. Fox conceiving an insinuation of main-

taining republican principles, as applicable to the British constitution, to have been made against him by Mr. Pitt,* and that part of Burke's speech tending to strengthen that notion, to remove the impression, declared his conviction that the British constitution, though defective in theory, was in practice excellently adapted to this country. He repeated, however, his praises of the French revolution; he thought it, on the whole, one of the most glorious events in the history of mankind; and proceeded to express his dissent from Burke's opinions on the subject, as inconsistent with just views of the inherent rights of mankind. These, besides, were, he said, inconsistent with Burke's former principles. He contended also that the discussion of the French revolution was irrelative to the Québec bill.

Burke, in reply, said, ' Mr. Fox has treated me with harshness and malignity:

* On this subject, Mr. Pitt, in the course of the discussion, explained his meaning to Mr. Fox's satisfaction.

after having harassed with his *light troops* in the skirmishes of order, he brought THE HEAVY ARTILLERY of his own great abilities to bear on me.' He maintained that the French constitution and general system were replete with anarchy, impiety, vice, and misery; that the discussion of a new polity for a province that had been under the French, and was now under the English government, was a proper opportunity of comparing the French and British constitutions. He denied the charge of inconsistency: his opinions on government, he insisted, had been the same during all his political life. He said, Mr. Fox and he had often differed, and that there had been no loss of friendship between them; but there is something in the *cursed French constitution*, which envenoms every thing. Fox whispered, 'there is no loss of friendship between us.' Burke answered, 'there is! I know the price of my conduct; our friendship is at an end.' He concluded with exhorting the two great men that headed the opposite parties—whether they should

move in the political hemisphere, as two blazing stars in opposite orbits, or walk together as brethren, that they would preserve the British constitution, and guard it against innovation.'

Mr. Fox was very greatly agitated by this renunciation of friendship, and made many concessions; but in the course of his speech still maintained that Burke had formerly held very different principles, and that he himself had learned from him those very principles which he now reprobated. He endeavoured to support his allegation by references to measures which Burke had either proposed or promoted; and also cited ludicrous expressions and observations of his to the same purpose. This repetition of the charge of inconsistency prevented the impression which the affectionate and respectful language and behaviour, and the conciliatory apologies of Fox might have probably made on Burke. It would be difficult to determine with certainty, whether constitutional irritability or public principle

was the chief cause of Burke's sacrifice of that friendship which he had so long cherished, and of which the talents and qualities of its object rendered him so worthy. However that may have been, it is certain, that Burke and Fox from this time never were on their former footing. It has been asserted also that Mr. Fox had made critical animadversions in private on the REFLEXIONS, which reached Burke's ears, mortified him as an author, and displeased him as a friend:—that he had considered it rather as an effusion of poetic genius than a philosophical investigation. As Burke certainly intended to investigate, and knew Fox to be endued with talents fit to examine and appreciate any process of reasoning, (if he allowed his mind the fair and full exertion) it was natural for him either to be mortified, that to a man, whose judgment he so highly prized, he had appeared not able to execute his design; or to be displeased that a partial exertion of his friend's great powers had prevented a fair decision. It is certainly natural for a writer to value what has cost him much

labour and thought, and to feel mortification on unfavourable criticism, if he highly respects the judgment of the critic, or believes him impartial in that particular case ; and to be displeased, if either desultory examination or partiality produce an erroneous verdict. In allowing that Burke might have had the feelings of an author, we only admit that he was subject to the common infirmities of a man.

Some days after the discussion between Fox and Burke, the following paragraph appeared in a very able diurnal publication, in the interest of Mr. Fox and his party. ‘ *Morning Chronicle*, May 12, 1791. “ The great and firm body of the Whigs of England, true to their principles, have decided on the dispute between Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke ; and the former is declared to have maintained the pure doctrines by which they are bound together, and upon which they have invariably acted. The consequence is, that Mr. Burke retires from Parliament.”

Burke, presuming that this consignation to retirement, and the implied censure on his conduct here declared, in the confidential vehicle of the opinions and sentiments of those who now called themselves the Whigs, entered into an inquiry into the title of the opposers of his doctrines to assume that appellation. The inquiry led him also to consider the circumstances and grounds of the dispute between him and Fox. These inquiries, principally, and the criticisms by the leading men on his book, subordinately, constitute the subject of his 'Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs.' In this performance he speaks of himself in the third person, expressing himself very modestly on the literary merits of his work: he assumes a more decisive tone in speaking of its scope and tendency. While he employs much humbler language concerning his own talents than any other person of any party would use on the same subject, he bestows the full but not exaggerated praise on the powers which adorned Parliament. Considering retirement as approaching, if not

by relegation, by voluntary exile, he bestows the following valedictory eulogium on the characters that composed it: 'Leaving the service of his country, he leaves Parliament without all comparison richer in abilities than he found it. Very solid and very brilliant talents distinguish the ministerial benches. The opposite rows are a sort of seminary of genius, and have brought forth such and so great talents as never before (amongst us at least) have appeared together. If their owners are disposed to serve their country, (he trusts they are) they are in a condition to render it services of the highest importance. If, through mistake or passion, they are led to contribute to its ruin, we shall at least have a consolation denied to the ruined country that adjoins us—we shall not be destroyed by men of mean or secondary capacities.'

He defends his reasoning on the French revolution, the propriety of discussing its principles and effects, when considering the plan of a new constitution for Canada, and

maintains the consistency of his political conduct through life. ‘Strip him,’ he says, ‘of his consistency, you leave him naked indeed.’ His uniform principles he illustrates by a recapitulation of his speeches and conduct. He cites the opinions of the most renowned Whigs of the time of King William and Queen Anne, especially those delivered on the trial of Dr. Sacheverel, when the political creed of the Whigs, if ever, was freely repeated, to shew that his notions, though disapproved of by the new Whigs, are in unison with those of the old. Venerating and loving the constitution in general, his anxiety was particularly excited by the danger he apprehended to its different members at different times,—for the democracy, the aristocracy, or the monarchy, as the one or other appeared likely to be borne down. On this subject he has the following illustration :

‘Whilst he opposes his defence on the part where the attack is made, he presumes, that for his regard to the just rights of all

the rest, he has credit in every candid mind. He ought not to apprehend, that his raising fences about popular privileges this day, will infer that he ought, on the next, to concur with those who would pull down the throne: because on the next he defends the throne, it ought not to be supposed that he has abandoned the rights of the people:

‘ A man who, among various objects of his equal regard, is secure of some, and full of anxiety for the fate of others, is apt to go to much greater lengths in his preference of the objects of his immediate solicitude than Mr. Burke has ever done. A man so circumstanced often seems to undervalue, to vilify, almost to reprobate and disown those that are out of danger. This is the voice of nature and truth, and not of inconsistency and false pretence. The danger of any thing very dear to us removes, for the moment, every other affection from the mind. When Priam had his whole thoughts employed on the body of his Hector, he repels with indignation, and drives from him

with a thousand reproaches, his surviving sons, who with an officious piety crowded about him to offer their assistance. A good critic (there is no better than Mr. Fox) would say, that this is a master-stroke, and marks a deep understanding of nature in the father of poetry. He would despise a Zoilus, who would conclude from this passage that Homer meant to represent this man of affliction as hating or being indifferent and cold in his affections to the poor reliques of his house, or that he preferred a dead carcase to his living children.

This pamphlet was chiefly written in the month of July, while Burke and his family were at Margate. During that period, he seemed totally unemployed; his mornings were mostly spent in walking about the fields, and especially towards the North Foreland, whence he used to take great pleasure in viewing the ships; the evenings, in easy and familiar intercourse with many of the Margate visitors, in the libraries, or at the rooms. He there, as indeed, on every

occasion, attended church regularly. He was devoutly attentive to the prayers, and also to the sermons, if the preachers kept within their sphere of moral and religious instruction; but when they departed from their official business, he could not always refrain from testifying his disapprobation. At this time there happened to be at Margate a popular preacher from the vicinity of London. That gentleman, like *the Grecian declaimer who undertook to lecture before Hannibal on the art of war*, delivered, in the presence of Burke, in Margate church, a long political sermon. Burke manifested an impatience which was observed by the whole congregation. He several times stood up, and took his hat, as if he expected that the discourse was about to end, and afterwards sat down with visible marks of disappointment and dissatisfaction. This probably arose from his dislike to political sermons, as that one was not worse than discourses in general are by persons of common abilities, who speak flippantly on subjects beyond their reach. His disapprobation of

such sermons he strongly testified in the following passage in his REFLEXIONS:—

‘POLITICS AND THE PULPIT are terms that have little agreement. No sound ought to be heard in the church but the healing voice of Christian charity. The cause of liberty and civil government gains as little as that of religion by this confusion of duties. Those who quit their proper character, to assume what does not belong to them, are, for the greater part, ignorant both of the character they leave, and of the character they assume. Wholly unacquainted with the world in which they are so fond of meddling, and inexperienced in all its affairs, on which they pronounce with so much confidence, they have nothing of politics but the passions they excite. *Surely the church is a place where one day’s TRUCE ought to be allowed to the dissensions and animosities of mankind.*’

Although the ‘Appeal’ very ably contrasted the doctrines of the old Whigs with those of Paine and other writers, supported

and disseminated by the new; and the work was distinguished for closeness of reasoning and regularity of method, as well as for energy and depth of observation; it was not equally read with his preceding performances on the subject.

At the time that Burke was adding a strong redoubt to the fortress which he had raised, the fabric underwent an attack so vigorous and so ably conducted as must have overthrown it, had not the foundation been laid very deep, and the superstructure consisted of the most massy and well disposed materials. In summer, 1791, Mackintosh's *VINDICIÆ GALLIÆ* was published. Other writers, in attacking Burke's *REFLEXIONS*, had mixed subjects foreign to that work; had charged the author with a dereliction of former opinions, and some of them had imputed either unworthy or frivolous motives. Mr. Mackintosh, rejecting every irrelative question, proceeds to the main object. Having studied Burke's writings and conduct, and investigated their principles,

he had discovered the charge of INCONSISTENCY to be unfounded ; and had seen that if the matter in consideration had been his general conduct, instead of a particular work, dereliction of a former system, opinions, and action could not be a subject of just accusation. The *VINDICIÆ GAL-LICÆ* is evidently the result of very great and very variegated powers and attainments. Taste, learning, invention, judgment, eloquence, acute reasoning, profound philosophy, and habits of correct and elegant composition are most fully and happily displayed. His illustrations, and allusions manifest great extent and multiplicity of knowledge ; the luminous arrangement, a comprehensiveness of understanding that examines every relation of its subject ; fertility of invention and correctness of judgment are shewn in framing his theory, and giving it consistency ; strong and animated eloquence is exhibited in various parts of the work, especially in describing the miseries of the despotism, the progress and completion of its overthrow, and the joy of its subjects on emancipation ; close and per-

spicuous statement and vigorous argumentation form the prominent character of his discussion ; profound philosophy, of his exhibitions of mind. The obvious purpose of the learned and able author is the melioration of the condition of man. Knowledge, science, and genius, prompted by philanthropy, do not always discover the most effectual means for the attainment of their ends. The perfection of reason consists in giving every object a consideration proportioned to its relative importance. This philosopher, turning his mind chiefly to possibility of happiness, rather overlooks capability of attainment. Convinced that men, habitually guided by reason, and determined by virtue, would be happier under small than considerable restraints, he proposes a controul too feeble for the actual state of mankind ; for the actual state of any men now existing ; much more of a people whose national character, FROM *the old despotism*, and other causes, required a greater degree of controul than some of their neighbours. Arguing from untried theory, instead of

experience, it is not surprising that the conclusions of this great man have been entirely contradicted by the event. The changes which he vindicates are too rapid FOR THE PROGRESSION of the human character,* and evidently very unsuitable to the actual character of the French.†

Of the works which Mr. Burke wrote after his 'Appeal from the New to the Old

* The reader will find this subject ably explained from a view of the operations of mind, and beautifully illustrated from the analogy of nature, in Dr. William Thomson's Letter to Dr. Parr, annexed to Dr. Parr's Statement of his Dispute with Curtis.

† The erroneous conclusions of this forcible and profound writer appear to have arisen from two sources: first, he argued from a supposition of an attainable perfection in the human character, instead of an accurate estimate of the degree of perfection which it had actually attained: secondly, he appears to have been misinformed concerning the principles, spirit, and character of the French revolutionists. As the genius of this great man became matured by experience, he rejected hypothesis, and reasoned from history and human nature as it actually exists. He saw the revolutionary character in the true colours, and now concurs with loyal and patriotic Britons in reprobating the jacobinical system, which the French revolution has generated. His blossom was brilliant theory, his mature fruit is the most valuable wisdom.

Whigs,' all were not published in the order of time in which they were written. Several performances of the greatest importance were not communicated to the world till after the author's death. I shall consider them in the order in which they were written, instead of that in which they were published.

Connected with his 'Appeal from the Old to the New Whigs,' which was the third of the series commencing with his book on the 'French Revolution,' including his 'Letter to a Noble Lord on the Subject in Discussion with the Duke of Bedford,' and his work on the 'Regicide Peace,' they exhibit the whole of Edmund Burke's opinions on the French revolution, and its effects, from the outset to the year of his death; they present a most profound view of principles, with a most complete summary of the situation and circumstances in which they had to operate; and of the means which would promote and accelerate their progress, or might retard or impede their general diffusion.

When it was announced in 1791, by the French Ambassador, that the King had accepted of the new constitution, Burke wrote ‘Hints for a Memorial,’ to be delivered to Monsieur Montmorin, which production makes a part of one of the Posthumous Publications. It contains an application to the existing circumstances of his general principles on the French revolution. He describes its nature and effects, and its partizans in different countries. He marks the probable progress of its spirit, he details circumstances in adjacent countries likely to promote its operation. He combats the opinion of those who thought that it would be dissolved from its own violence. It is, he thinks, invulnerable by internal attacks solely. Its resources, he alledges, are not in its credit, in its national finances, or any of the usual constituents; but in its wickedness, which makes all property subservient to its use. He sums up his arguments into three propositions:—first, that no counter-revolution is to be expected in France from internal causes solely. Secondly, That the longer the present system exists, the greater

will be its strength. Thirdly, That as long as it exists in France, it would be the interest of the revolutionists to distract and revolutionize other countries.

In 1792, the operations of French principles in this country became very extensive and very dangerous. Paine had published his *second part* of the 'Rights of Man,' which may be considered as an exhortation to the subjects of existing governments, especially of Britain, TO A PRACTICAL APPLICATION of the theory of his first part. The purport of it was simply this: 'I have before told you that your government is a very bad one: I now earnestly recommend to you to get rid of it; pull down your monarchy, aristocracy, all your establishments, level every distinction; *so only* can you enjoy the Rights of Man.' This second part was by the societies spread with still more indefatigable industry and ardent zeal than the first. Productions connecting the speculations and precepts of Paine with the example of France, as lessons and models

for this country, were widely dispersed. Thomas Paine was represented as the Minister of God dispensing light to a darkened world.* Government finding attempts to reduce these wild theories to practice, issued a proclamation recommending to individuals to discourage such writings and their probable effects; and enjoining the magistrates to employ means for preserving the public tranquillity, which these attempts tended so much to disturb. An association, as the reader must remember, had been formed by Messrs. Sheridan, Mackintosh, Erskine, Francis, Courtenay, Lord Lauderdale, Major Maitland, Messrs. Grey, Whitbread, and Lambton, comprising great talents, property, and respectability, under the name of the 'Friends of the People,' to procure a reform in Parliament. Although the character of the individuals who composed this

* Especially in a very daring daily paper of that time, the object of which was to abuse the constitution of this country. In the *Argus* there were two verses in imitation of the praise of Newton:

'The world was hid in universal night.'

'God said, let Paine arise, and all was light!'

body, and the stake many of them had in the country, precluded every idea that their object was any thing more than a moderate reform, yet they afforded a colourable pretext to the formation of societies of a very different description and of very different views. Under pretence of seeking reform, many individuals, in every quarter of the country, established Corresponding Societies, of which it has by no means appeared, that all the members sought a moderate reform, or by peaceable means. The discussion of the proclamation brought forward the sentiments of many of the members on reform in Parliament. Burke, as he had always done, declared his disapprobation of it as unnecessary, and reprobated its agitation at that time as dangerous. Other members, who had formerly been favourable to reform in Parliament, opposed it then. Mr. Pitt conceiving that every political measure was to be estimated not merely on abstract principles, but on these, combined with the circumstances of the case, argued, that although a reform might have been expedient before the minds of many individuals were

unhinged by Paine and his co-operators, any *change* would then be improper, when ideas of *subversion* were entertained.

During the recess of 1792 the public ferment increased. The French having dethroned their King, and massacred their opponents, deputations were sent from the societies in England to congratulate them on the progress of light. The retreat of the Duke of Brunswick, a retreat not displeasing to some even of the moderate friends of liberty, to those, at least, who considered the good of real liberty in the abstract more than of the phantom that had assumed its name in France, greatly emboldened the democratical republicans of England, who admired that phantom. The French, elated with success, published their proffer of support to all people who should be desirous of what they (the French) termed liberty. About the capital the approaching downfall of the British constitution began to be a subject of common talk. King, Lords, and Commons, church and state, were described

as on the eve of dissolution. The garrulous vanity of some of the weak and ignorant members of the democratical societies boasted of the situations they were to attain under the new order to be speedily established. There was evidently (as far as people can judge from circumstances) a design formed to overthrow the constitution; and confidence of its success.* Wisdom, indeed, common prudence dictated to Government to take effectual measures for crushing pernicious designs. It may be said that there was no proof of the existence of a plot sufficient to bring the supposed conspirators to trial. That was, doubtless, very true at that time; but, certainly numberless cases may call for the vigilance of deliberative assemblies, which could not be evinced on a judicial trial.

Burke, on the commencement of the war between the German potentates and the

* To accurate and impartial observers of the sentiments and opinions prevalent among many in 1792, especially in November of that year, I appeal whether this account is exaggerated.

French republic, had sent his son to Coblenz, with the knowledge and approbation of Government, in order to know the dispositions of the allied Powers. From the apparent want of concert between these potentates, he did not augur highly of the success of their efforts. It was early his opinion that nothing short of a general combination of established governments, co-operating with the royalists of France, could subdue a system, which, if not crushed, he conceived, would be destructive to all existing society. Soon after the retreat of the King of Prussia, and the subsequent successes of the republicans, he wrote the second memorial contained in his posthumous works. He exhorted this country to take the lead in forming a general combination for the repression of French power and of French principles. Before this was published the opening of the Scheldt, and the acts of France to promote her own aggrandisement, and also measures and decrees tending to interfere with the internal government of this country, had produced hostilities.

The internal dangers of the nation had excited a general association in defence of liberty and property against republicans and levellers. The militia was embodied, other precautions were taken by the executive government, and Parliament was assembled. Burke coincided with Ministry in contending that great danger existed to this constitution and country from Jacobinical principles, and designs abroad and at home. The Duke of Portland, Lord Fitzwilliam, Lord Spencer, and other leading men of the old Whig interest; Lord Stormont, Lord Carlisle, Lord Loughborough, and, except Messrs. Adam, Courtenay, and Lord Guildford, the principal men of the North part of the coalition, were impressed with the same alarm; and also the learned, ingenious, and able friend of Burke, Mr. Windham. Mr. Fox and his party ridiculed the idea of internal danger, considered the invasion of France as a combination of despots against freedom, and declared their joy at the compelled retreat of the Prussians and Austrians. Fox censured Ministry for removing from

the Guards officers who had sought and received fraternity from the enemies of kingly government abroad, and were connected with societies inimical to the British constitution at home. Mr. Fox, indeed, seems to have retained his admiration of the French spirit when it was evidently producing effects contrary to what, if he had attended chiefly to them, his patriotism, benevolence, and wisdom, could have approved. With a mind of a force and comprehension which few have equalled, he did not always turn his attention to the whole 'circuit of affairs.' Possessing intellectual *optics* which nothing within the reach of man could elude, *his views* were not always equally circumspect. One object sometimes engaged his mind so much as to prevent the due consideration of others equally important. Adopting a principle, he was sometimes guided by it too implicitly, without subjecting it to the modifications, or bounding it by the limits which were necessary either to just deduction or prudent measures. On certain occasions the powers of his extraor-

dinary genius have been exerted rather in the invention of the most apposite means, than in the choice of the wisest ends. The love of liberty, a sentiment so natural to a noble and generous mind, and so congenial to the feelings of an Englishman, so much occupied this great man, that he cherished its excesses, and even its counterfeit; a counterfeit producing the greatest mischiefs, both to its votaries and their neighbours. The question was not, whether foreign despots, attacking a free country, deserved the support or opposition of a free country, and the good wishes of its citizens? If stated in that abstract form, it must certainly be answered in the negative. But whether a nation of known ambition, increased energy, in the career of external conquest, stimulating internal discord in all countries to which its agents had access, was not to be repressed, because, in the attempt to check, we must have the assistance of arbitrary powers? This was the reasoning of Burke and Windham, in which they, on the whole, coincided with Dundas, Grenville, and Pitt.

The question of expediency of war with France was certainly a subject concerning which men of the greatest talents and best intentions might differ, according to the view they took of it; as, indeed, such men did differ. Those who are thoroughly satisfied of the justice and policy of the war with France, unless uncandid, must admit, that of the able men who opposed it, THEIR CHARACTER and THEIR STAKE in the country was a ground for believing that most of them opposed it from conviction.

Never did parliamentary eloquence shine with more lustre than during the debates relative to the internal state of the country and the war with France. The subject was, indeed, of much more extensive and complicated importance, and of still nearer interest, than that of America itself. Parliament contained a still greater assemblage of genius* than during the discussion with

* The speeches of Messrs. Dundas, Windham, and Burke, on the effects of the new doctrines in this kingdom; those of Lord Grenville and of Mr. Pitt on the conduct of France

the colonies. Burke never exerted his mind with more energy during the vigour of his age, than now that he had attained his grand climacteric. But as he had considered the questions agitated as of infinitely greater moment, he was still more anxious to have other members, whose talents he admired and venerated, of the same sentiments and opinion with himself. He was peculiarly desirous to impress Fox with his own notion of the pernicious materials of which the French system was composed; the direful effects that had proceeded, and were likely to proceed from it; the necessity of the most-vigorous efforts to repress its extension, and even to crush its existence. Entertaining the very highest opinion of his extraordinary talents, he urged his co-operation, and was disappointed to displeasure when he failed of success. In these opinions and sentiments we see the origin of his Letter

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and the causes of the war, contain most important information concerning that momentous period; as do those of their opponents very great ingenuity.

to the Duke of Portland, ‘on the Conduct of Domestic Parties.’ The letter was never intended to be made public. It was designed for the perusal of his Grace and Lord Fitzwilliam only, to account to these noblemen for his disapprobation of the most active members of that party, with which they still continued in some degree to act; and deposited with the Duke, not to be read by him and his friend until a separation from Mr. Fox, which he perceived must take place, should ensue. A rough draft of the letter had been copied by the amanuensis whom he employed. From that a surreptitious copy was printed in the beginning of 1797, in which the title was falsified; and it was represented to be ‘fifty-four articles of impeachment against the Right Hon. Charles James Fox.’ An injunction from Chancery was applied for immediately by the friends of Burke;—but too late; the mischief was done. By the treachery of a confidential agent, a paper was given to the public which was intended for the private perusal of two friends. On hearing of the

publication, Burke, then at Bath, wrote Dr. Lawrence the letter which he quotes.* There he says, ‘Wherever this matter comes into discussion, I authorize you to contradict the infamous reports, which (I am informed) have been given out, that this paper had been circulated through the Ministry, and was intended gradually to slide into the press. But I beg you and my friends to be cautious how you let it be understood that I disclaim any thing but the mere act and intention of publication. I do not retract any one of the sentiments contained in that memorial, which was and is my justification, addressed to the friends, for whose use alone I intended it. Had I designed it for the public I should have been more exact and full. It was written in a tone of indignation, in consequence of the resolutions of the Whig Club,† which were directly

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* Preface to Burke's Posthumous Works.

† In the Whig Club, at their meeting in February 1793, Lord William Russell proposed a resolution approving of the conduct of Mr. Fox, and expressed in such a manner as

pointed against myself and others, and occasioned our secession from that club; which is the last act of my life that I shall under any circumstances repent. Many temperaments and explanations there would have been, if ever I had a notion that it should meet the public eye.'

Burke had in 1792 privately used every effort in his power to bring Fox to join in what he considered as the salvation of his country. Alarmed as he was at the progress of French principles in this country, rapidly accelerated by the success of its power on the continent, he conceived the preservation of the constitution, of the country, of every thing dear to Britons, to be in the power of Fox. 'With Mr. Fox,' said he, 'we may save the country; even without him we ought to attempt it.' His

to convey a censure on those members who had of late differed with him in political sentiments and conduct. Burke, Windham, and other eminent men, who considered themselves as implicated in the censure, desired to withdraw their names from the club.

regret and displeasure at the failure of his attempts has probably led him to an asperity in his strictures upon Fox in this letter to the Duke of Portland, which many, who agree with Burke's sentiments and opinions on the general questions, will think unjust. Every measure of the Minority during that period, every opposition to the plans of Government respecting internal or external politics, he censures, and charges them all on Mr. Fox. Even societies to which he gave no countenance, 'the Friends of the People,' 'the Friends of the Freedom of the Press,' are presumed by him to be objects of reprobation, and Fox to be principally blameable, because he supposes he might have prevented their formation.*

In summer, 1793, the political labours of Burke had an agreeable relaxation in his visit to Oxford, when his friend, the Duke

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* Mr. Fox's conduct on this occasion shall be fully discussed in a future work; it appears to me to afford a very striking illustration of a prominent feature in his character.

of Portland, was to be installed Chancellor of the University; a ceremony which was conducted with great dignity and splendour. Burke received the most flattering marks of attention, both in public and private, from the principal persons who composed the meeting. During this week he was the guest of the Rev. Mr. Winstanley, Principal of Alban-hall and Camden Professor of Ancient History; a gentleman for whom he always manifested a particular esteem, and whose interest he endeavoured, on all occasions, to promote. This circumstance, with innumerable others of the like nature, might be adduced in contradiction to the assertion, that Burke was not a warm friend of literary merit.*

* Another assertion, equally ill-founded, that Burke's knowledge of languages was superficial, stands refuted by unquestionable authority. Mr. Winstanley, in a letter to a friend, expresses himself in the following terms, which, though unauthorized, I take the liberty to transcribe.

'It would be indeed as useless, as it would be presumptuous, in me, to attempt to add to the reputation of Mr. Burke. Among the studies to which I have immediately applied, there is one, which, from his attention to the more

Young Mr. Burke was, at this time, with Mr. Windham, Mr. Malone, the Hon. Frederick North, and others, admitted to the honorary degree of LL. D.

The eagerness of Burke to repress French principles and power appeared this summer, in the joy he discovered on hearing the news of the taking Valenciennes. Mr. Dundas dispatched a messenger to communicate the tidings to Mr. Burke, whom he found at a country theatre, at Charlefont, some miles from Beaconsfield. Burke, on reading the

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important concerns of active life, it might be supposed that he had overlooked :—I mean that of ancient and modern languages. Those, however, who were acquainted with the universality of his information, will not be surprised to hear that it would have been exceedingly difficult to have met with a person who knew more of the philosophy, the history and filiation of languages, or of the principles of etymological deduction, than Mr. Burke.

The character of Mr. Winstanley, as a man profoundly skilled both in the ancient and modern languages, stamps an authority upon his judgment, sufficient to overturn all vague assertion, that Burke was little acquainted with the learned tongues.

letter, went upon the stage, and read it to the audience with every mark of delight.

Towards the close of the year, when affairs wore a less favourable aspect to the Allies, he wrote a third memorial, entitled 'Remarks on the Policy of the Allies with respect to France.' In this paper he intimates, that the object of the several allied Powers was evidently private aggrandizement more than the support of legitimate government, religion, and property, against Jacobinism. He gives a very pathetic description of the dreadful state of France under the existing anarchy; and contends that whatever partial changes may take place, while the principles continue, similar misery, if not the same, is to be expected; that the reduction of parts of the French territories under the dominion of any of the Allies could not promote the wisest purpose of the war. The only certain means of restoring order, religion, and property in France, was, by committing the chief direction of every thing respecting her

internal affairs to the emigrant princes, nobility, gentry, and clergy. These, which he calls the 'Moral France,' ought to have the arrangement of the government now usurped over the arithmetical and geographical France. Under them only could it be expected, he thought, that the blessings of religion, order, virtue, and property could be established. After the great convulsions and the state of anarchy then prevalent, it was his opinion, that the establishment of a fixed and permanent constitution could not be effected without the preparatory exercise, by those classes, of something approaching to a military government. When that should be fixed, he recommends a scheme of 'discriminating justice, tempered with enlightened mercy,' of the greatest wisdom, if it were expedient that those classes should possess the power which it pre-supposes. It might be a question with many, whether these emigrants, either in their general conduct and characters, or in their behaviour, had exhibited such talents and qualities as would render a discretionary

power in their possession likely to form a good government. At the same time, those who think the most meanly of the emigrants, as a body, will allow that there was some probability that any government they had contrived could not be more inconsistent with liberty and happiness, than the Roberespian and succeeding schemes in France.

February 6th, 1794, Mr. Burke experienced a loss that deeply afflicted him, by the death of his brother, Mr. Richard Burke, recorder of Bristol. That gentleman was endued with considerable acuteness and knowledge. The warm and affectionate heart of Edmund suspending, in that instance, the exercise of his discrimination, represented to him Richard as a man of extraordinary abilities. He was, besides, nearly of the same age; they had been comrades and friends from their earliest days, and through life, as well as brothers.

The vigilance of Government, and the prevention of all communication with France,

had repressed, but not crushed the doctrines of Paine and his coadjutors. Of the new theories, there were gradations and classes, adapted to different kinds of readers or hearers. For the vulgar there were the vehement declamation, the unqualified invective, the poignant abuse, the well-aimed sophistry of Paine himself, and on his plan. As genius invents, humbler talents imitate. There were thousands of Jacobinical writers, who endeavoured to accommodate his notions, speculations, and precepts, to the varying circumstances of affairs, in order the more effectually to inflame. Demagogues, calling themselves political lecturers, did their best to promote the same end of exciting disaffection, desire of innovation, and the consequent action. As the lessons of Paine and his imitators in writing, and the efforts of Thelwall and his fellow-labourers, could produce effect among only the very lowest and most ignorant, there were authors of a higher cast of literature, though much beneath the abilities of Paine. By these novels were constructed to misrepresent the

existing institutions, orders, and classes, to readers of a taste above relishing the coarseness of Paine, or the feebleness and ignorance of itinerant lecturers. There were others to devise systems of philosophy, to please those that dabbled in what they supposed metaphysics. These set themselves about overthrowing the doctrines of religion and a future state; free agency, natural affection, friendship, and patriotism; that thus philanthropy might not operate in the cases in which it was most likely to produce happiness,—*as a moral improvement*: they proposed the dissolution of all government, the annihilation of property, and the leveling of ranks and distinctions;—*as a political improvement*. To excite, foment, or increase discontent among the uninformed, there were Paine and coadjutors; for persons of more taste and knowledge, but with confined views of mankind, there were Holcroft's novels; for those that had a glimmering of metaphysics, and who, engaging in what they did not understand, forgot what they did, there was Godwin. Paine,

Holcroft, and Godwin had established three great banks of anarchy and infidelity (there might be much greater capitalists that did not avow themselves) whose notes inferior dealers took, and circulated for current cash.

Inflamed by teachers and ministers of sedition, many of the populace conceived themselves to be totally deprived of their rights, and that nothing would restore them but a national convention. A plan of this sort having been tried in Edinburgh, and a meeting having taken place, under that name, in which also the subordinate phraseology of the French was adopted, to shew the model of imitation; the meeting having been dispersed by the activity of the chief magistrate, and the leaders punished, an assembly of the same kind * was preparing to be held in England. While the societies,

* A national convention of delegates having, by our constitution, no authority to alter the government; but, according to Paine's Rights of Man, necessary to regenerate the government of Britain.

their committees, and sections, by their proceedings, severally and jointly, shewed the *object* to be a change, not indeed exactly defined, but obviously not consistent with the existing constitution of this country, and *by means* not warranted by its laws. These plans verified the predictions of Burke respecting the effect of wild theories in this country, as the whole system of the French operations, in principle and detail, in every transfer of power, had verified his predictions concerning their effect in France. On the bill for *detaining suspected persons*, which Ministers found necessary, in order to detect and overthrow the designs of democratic malecontents, Mr. Burke took a very active part; and displayed at once his eloquence and his wisdom. The issue of the trials that followed the inquiry concerning the proceedings of the societies, does not, in the least, affect the predictions of Burke. All that the acquittal proved, was, that the jury did not receive the legal definition of treason in the same sense in which the Attorney-General used it as the ground of the

indictment ; or the grand jury as the ground for finding a bill. There might be devised by the fertile invention of wickedness many modes of conduct of equal moral culpability and political hurt with those that are punishable capitally. Every impartial man will see grounds for inference in cases where there are not grounds for verdicts.

Burke had resolved to retire from Parliament when the trial of Hastings should be finished. This summer a sentence was passed, and Burke soon after resigned his seat.

During the important period of Burke's parliamentary life, the eloquence of the senate had received very considerable improvement. Able men took a wider range of knowledge ; investigated more profoundly ; and thus their discussions, besides their immediate applicability to the questions at issue, contained a much greater quantity of general truth. Although this effect may be in some degree owing to the

progression of philosophy, yet it has been considerably accelerated by individual genius. In Fox's orations we have found, from the commencement of his intimacy with Burke, a more rapid advancement in political philosophy than even his own great mind would probably so soon have produced. All those who admire the force of his eloquence, (and who, that possesses taste, and, what is of more consequence, comprehension of understanding, that does not?) if they have attentively considered its progression, will acknowledge that Burke's conversation, speeches, and writings have tended to enhance its value. Mr. Grey, Lord Lauderdale, Duke of Bedford, Messrs. Courtenay, Erskine, Sheridan, and other distinguishing observers, who look up to Fox as the highest where they themselves are high, will admit that great additions have been made to the attainments of their friend by Edmund Burke. Great minds only can derive great accessions of intellectual riches from intellectual treasures. There is a gentleman of the first talents, cultivated

by literature and disciplined by science, who has profited beyond most men from the example and lessons of Burke, as his mind was more peculiarly fitted for receiving the advantages, not by nature only, but by a similar course of previous study. Mr. Windham, before he entered Parliament, had bestowed very great attention on letters and philosophy, and had attained uncommon excellence in logical closeness, acute reasoning, and profound investigation. Intimately acquainted with other men of letters, and a most favourite companion of the Litchfield sage, he had a mind well fitted by nature, and prepared by pursuit and habit, for receiving the wisdom of Burke. Between men of congenial minds, intimacy is generally the follower of acquaintance. Mr. Windham soon became the most confidential friend of the illustrious personage. Like Burke, he loved liberty as the means of happiness ; venerated the British constitution as the best preserver of freedom to that extent. Thoroughly acquainted with the human mind, he perceived that the surest ratiocina-

tive guide was experience ; and was, therefore, like his friend, an enemy to speculative innovations. His speeches are less those of an orator that wishes to impress your feelings, than of a philosopher, who seeks to inform, convince, and expand your understanding. His orations were less frequent than those of many very inferior speakers, (at least very inferior reasoners) he seldom spoke much, unless on important subjects ; but the knowledge, the argumentation, the philosophy exhibited by him when he did speak, had rendered his character very high ; as also the estimation in which he was held by the party of which he was a member, and by those of the opposite side. From his own rules of reasoning he had judged unfavourably of the French system, proceeding on principles so very contrary. The expanded philosophy of his friend confirmed the conclusions of his own mind. He reprobated the new order of France, and dreaded it when practically held up as a model for Britain. Then did his powers fully unfold themselves. In

the discussions on the internal state of the country, as affected by the dissemination of levelling doctrines, animated by the momentous subject, he displayed an energetic eloquence that few could equal; but that he himself has since equalled, when occasions arose to call forth his MIND.

On the same subject, the internal state of the country, Mr. Dundas had very fully displayed his intellectual powers: powers, which those who confound principals and adjuncts do not justly estimate; but those who can, in their operations, appreciate the qualities of mind, highly value. Official habits of business so easily master common details, that it is not reckoned a proof of great talents to be distinguished *as a man of business*. To transact affairs in the predated routine is certainly a matter of no ingenuity or ability; but that is no proof that great ability may not be shewn in the transaction of affairs. Mr. Dundas is distinguished not merely for business, but for the ready comprehension of the most com-

plicated details and intricate relations, for instantaneous perception of the case, application of the principle, decision of resolution, and promptness of dispatch. Both in the senate and in office he is most peculiarly eminent for immediately taking off the husk, and finding the kernel. An understanding naturally strong, had been exerted in his profession long enough to invigorate* his faculties without contracting their exertion. He too, for a long period of his parliamentary life, rarely spoke, unless on great occasions. On these he shewed the readiness of his penetration, the extent of appropriate knowledge, and the masculine strength of his intellect. One proof of his penetration was, that he first perceived the nature of a very great mind, and its fitness even in early youth for that situation which generally requires maturity of years to be united with genius.

When Mr. Burke retired from the senate, his only son Richard was destined to be his

* See Burke's character of Mr. Grenville.

successor as member for the borough of Malton. That gentleman had given proofs of considerable abilities. Those who were most intimate with him give him the praise of a clear, acute, and vigorous understanding ; and affirm that, if his health had permitted the close and intense application which he was disposed to bestow, he would have equalled most men of his age. Even with the interrupted attention which he was able to give, he had acquired the high opinion of men of rank and talents ; an opinion which his conduct as agent for the Roman Catholics of Ireland confirmed. He was deeply conversant in the history and constitution both of Ireland and Britain. He is said to have ministered to the genius of his father in collating some of the instances of speeches and opinions by old Whigs, to whom his father appeals from the new.

The father looked on the son thus really able, as a prodigy of genius, and even regarded him as his own superior. With great delight he committed him to the patronage

of Earl Fitzwilliam, who, now nominated Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, appointed him his Secretary. With great delight he introduced him to his own constituents, the friends of his valued friends, the Marquis of Rockingham and Earl Fitzwilliam. Mr. Burke, during that excursion to Yorkshire, was in very high spirits, and returned to town in the same state. He had, at that time, a town-house in Duke-street, St. James's. There his son and he arrived on or about July 25th. The next day a party of intimate friends dined with them, and found him exulting in the appointment of his son to situations, which he conceived him so admirably fitted to fill. His guests never saw him more animated, or more delightful company. When, however, they beheld the sallow and emaciated looks of the son, they regretted that the father's joy did not allow him to see the young gentleman's dangerous state of health. Mr. Richard Burke now went to lodge at Cromwell-house, Brompton, while his father spent his time partly with him and partly in town, or at Beaconsfield. Mr. Burke, the younger,

was really in the last stage of a lingering illness, which his father, misled by his own sanguine hopes, had unfortunately not thought alarming. On Saturday, August 2d, a gentleman, who had been one of the guests the preceding Saturday, calling on a friend in Brompton-row, was informed that Mr. Richard Burke was just breathing his last. Proceeding to his lodgings, to ascertain the truth of the report, he soon saw an old domestic of the family, whose looks announced that all was over. On enquiry, he heard the father was arrived, had thrown himself on the corpse of his beloved son, and was, in the paroxysms of grief, calling on the stay of his age, the darling of his heart, and the glory of his name. The wisdom and religion of Mr. Burke, in time, so far moderated his grief, as to prevent its ebullitions from appearing; he *bore his sorrows like a man, but felt them like a man*. Mr. Richard Burke died at the age of 36, and was buried in Beaconsfield church. His father could never after bear to see the place of his in-

terment; and when going from his villa to town, instead of coming through Beaconsfield, he took a cross road behind an eminence which intercepted the sight of the church. His grief was 'strong and deep,' says the Editor of his Posthumous Works, 'but it never relaxed the vigour of his mind, whatever subject called upon him to exert it; nor the interest which he took, to the last moment, in the public weal.'

On the subject of the Irish Catholics, the opinion of Burke, as often expressed, and particularly in his 'Letter to Sir Hercules Langrish,' was, that a gradual and modified relief should be granted to them, so that they might finally be raised to a level with other dissenters.*

At the state trials, Burke's name had been very freely mentioned by the first ju-

* The reader will please to observe, that as the propriety, extent, and time of alterations in the present system must depend on future regulations and events, it would be useless to discuss the question now.

cial orator of this country and age. Some months after, on the return of Lord Fitzwilliam, when the causes of the recall were the subject of inquiry by the Peers, the Duke of Norfolk threw out some reflections against Mr. Burke, * as having written a book, which, amidst much splendour of eloquence, contained much pernicious doctrine, and had provoked, on the other side, a very mischievous answer.* This attack drew from Burke a reply, in which he also took notice of the animadversions made on his works at the trials. The letter is dated May 26, 1795, and shews that his domestic affliction had not impaired the vigour of his faculties: it was addressed to his highly prized friend Mr. Windham. Burke directs chiefly against his opponents his versatile, sportive, but strong and sarcastic humour. He enters into a most eloquent vindication of his own conduct respecting the French revolution; protesting that his object was the preservation of that religion, virtue, and

* Preface to Posthumous Works, page 67.

happiness, which the French system was using every effort to destroy. He strongly expresses his regret that the King of Prussia had abandoned the alliance ; and endeavours to demonstrate that nothing short of a general combination, pursuing the same object in concert, will prevent the French system from overwhelming Europe.

Soon after the death of his son, the King was pleased to settle a considerable pension on him and Mrs. Burke. His detractors had alledged that his embarrassed circumstances had been the cause of the part he took in the French revolution ; that he wished to conciliate the favour of Ministry, and thought this a very advantageous opportunity. To assign motives is so much easier than to combat arguments, that it is not surprising that many of Mr. Burke's opponents have chosen that mode. To promote effectually even the purposes of malignity, requires an invention not merely following the suggestions of malice, but regarding also consistency and probability. The general cha-

racter of Burke, his sacrifice of interest to principle, or even to party, - with very little intermission from the year 1765 to 1790 (for it cannot well be doubted, that if he had chosen to sacrifice other considerations to his interest, he might have got into office) renders the charge improbable. What, however, is improbable may be true. It is *possible* that one may act the part of an honest disinterested man for twenty-five years, and turn a rogue the twenty-sixth. But it is to be presumed he will not become so gratuitously. Supposing, as Mr. McCormick asserts, that Edmund Burke had humbly applied to Ministry to admit him as one of their creatures, would he desert all his old friends for nothing? If he became the tool of corruption, where was the bribe? If he attacked French liberty to please the British Ministry; if, to gratify them, he attempted to shew the evils of untried theories, and especially of such a theory, he certainly conducted himself very foolishly in procuring no emolument, no appointment, no official situation from them

during the time that he bore the brunt of the battle. While in Parliament, and that he could effectually serve them, he received nothing. The pension was presented to him when he was no longer in a situation to give them his assistance. It must, therefore, have been some other cause, not a bargain for gain, that made him attack the French system. Besides, if he were ever so corrupt, his arguments depended upon their intrinsic force, not on his motives for wielding that force.

His pension having become the subject of disapprobation from Lord Lauderdale and the Duke of Bedford, he, in the beginning of 1796, wrote a 'Letter to a Noble Lord,' (Lord Fitzwilliam) on the strictures made on him by Lord Lauderdale and the Duke of Bedford. There are occasions on which it becomes a duty to assert one's own merits. This Burke does in the letter in question. Firmly, but without arrogance, he goes over his reform plans, his proceedings respecting India, and others of the principal

acts of his life. What he says of his services to this country, impartial examiners of his conduct must think MUCH LESS than truth would have justified, or even occasion required. The retrospective view of the means by which the Duke of Bedford's ancestors acquired their property must have been the mere effect of anger at a censure passed on a just recompence, and not intended as reasoning. It is generally said that Burke's account of the Russell acquisitions is erroneous; but however that may be, it was foreign to the purpose. The Duke of Bedford, as a member of Parliament, had a right to inquire into the disposal of the public money, even if he had been the heir of Empson and Dudley. Mr. Burke could have proved, as Lord Grenville did prove, that in that case it was a tribute to merit. The argument against the Duke of Bedford's conduct, from what Lord Keppel, his uncle, would have thought, had he been alive, is also irrelative. But with some objections to particular arguments, this letter displays an extent of knowledge, a

brilliancy of fancy, and a force of genius that shew it to be BURKE ALL OVER * The allusion (page 3.) to *John Zisca's* skin is not new to Burke: in 1782 he had applied it to Mr. Fox, when ill, and, as Burke had some apprehension, dangerously. The following passage on the loss of his son is peculiarly pathetic:

‘ Had it pleased God to continue to me the hopes of succession, I should have been, according to my mediocrity, and the mediocrity of the age I live in, a sort of founder of a family; † I should have left a son, who, in all the points in which personal merit can be viewed, in science, in erudition, in genius, in taste, in honour, in generosity, in humanity, in every liberal sentiment, and

* A reviewer having met a friend who had read this letter before he himself had perused it, asked him what he thought of it? The gentleman answered, ‘ it is *Burke all over.*’

English Review, April 1796.

† It is believed that a peerage had been intended for Burke; but that, on the death of his son, the intention was abandoned, as an unavailing honour.

every liberal accomplishment, would not have shewn himself inferior to the Duke of Bedford, or to any of those whom he traces in his line. His Grace very soon would have wanted all plausibility in his attack upon that provision which belonged more to mine than to me. He would soon have supplied every deficiency, and symmetrized every disproportion. It would not have been for that successor to resort to any stagnant wasting reservoir of merit in me, or in any ancestry. He had in himself a salient, living spring of generous and manly action. Every day he lived he would have repurchased the bounty of the crown, and ten times more, if ten times more he had received. He was made a public creature; and had no enjoyment whatever, but in the performance of some duty. At this exigent moment, the loss of a finished man is not easily supplied.

‘ But a Disposer, whose power we are little able to resist, and whose wisdom it behoves us not at all to dispute, has ordained

it in another manner, and (whatever my querulous weakness might suggest) a far better. The storm has gone over me; and I lie like one of those old oaks which the late hurricane has scattered about me. I am stripped of all my honours; I am torn up by the roots, and lie prostrate on the earth! There, and prostrate there, I most unfeignedly recognize the Divine justice, and in some degree submit to it.

In the letter to the Duke of Bedford he alludes to the efforts of that nobleman, and other illustrious characters, to stir up an opposition to the treason and seditious-meeting bills. These bills he thought highly expedient, and the last absolutely necessary. Seditious meetings, he had been long aware, had become very prevalent, especially those for the purpose of hearing demagogues abuse the constitution, in what they called lectures. Weak and ignorant as these lecturers were, he does not, therefore, think them harmless, and recommends to Government effectually to shut up such schools of

rebellion and Jacobinism. Wisdom neglects no agent of mischief, however personally contemptible. Edmund Burke advises Ministry to guard against the machinations of John Thelwall.

Burke now spent his time almost entirely in the country. In his literary studies, in the soothing company of his wife and friends, in the pleasing prospect of being able to satisfy every just demand, and to leave a competent provision for the faithful and affectionate partner of his cares, in the exercise of active benevolence, and in the consciousness of having done his duty, he received all the consolation, for the irreparable loss he had sustained, of which he was susceptible. While he had employed every effort which a philanthropic heart could prompt, and the wisest head could direct, for stimulating civilized governments to combat irreligion, impiety, immorality, inhumanity, cruelty, and anarchy, he in a narrower sphere relieved, to the utmost of his power, those who had suffered exile and

proscription from the direful system. His heart, his house, his purse, were open to the distressed emigrants. Through his beneficent contribution and influence, a school was instituted in his neighbourhood, for the education of those whose parents, from adherence to principle, were unable to afford to their children useful tuition. This school still continues to flourish, and, by the judicious choice of teachers, to answer the wise and humane purposes of the institution.

While thus promoting the advantage of foreign sufferers, he did not relax in his attention to the humble and industrious of his own countrymen. He continued to encourage and superintend benefit clubs among the labourers and mechanics of Beaconsfield, and was himself a subscriber, for their advantage. The object was to encourage industry, to cherish affection, to establish a fund of provision for the sick and aged, which should not be merely eleemosynary, where frugality and activity should be the

means, in some degree, of independence, and to cheer parents with the prospect of having their children instructed in religion, virtue, and the knowledge useful for their stations. The institution flourished under the auspices of its founder. I conversed, at Beaconsfield, with several of its members, soon after the author was no more, and from their plain unlettered sense received the strongest conviction of the goodness of the plan and the wisdom of the regulations; and in the emotion of their hearts, the expression of their countenances, the flowing of their tears, saw much more than I could have perceived from words,—their adoring gratitude and admiration.

These exercises of private beneficence did not withdraw his mind from the consideration of the public interest. When the appearance of melioration in the principles and government of France induced our Sovereign, desirous if possible to restore to his people the blessings of peace, to make overtures for conciliation with the French

Directory, Burke resumed his pen. Having found that all his predictions from the principles and first phenomena of the French system had been verified, and been in detail even worse than he had forboded,—that they disavowed every religious and moral obligation which regulates the conduct of men,—he totally disapproved of agreements with them, their probable adherence to which would pre-suppose that they admitted the same rules of morality as other men. His opinion he supported in his ‘Thoughts on the Prospect of a Regicide Peace.’ Never had the force of his wonderful genius more completely manifested itself than in this work, which he wrote under the idea that it was not long to precede his death. Of its general excellence we cannot have an abler description than in the introduction to the review of it by the ‘British Critic.’*

‘Accustomed as we are, in common with most other reading men of this country, to

* For Decemb. 1796, page 661.

contemplate with admiration the powers and resources of Mr. Burke's extraordinary mind, we have found ourselves more impressed than usual with the letters now before us ; more than by any publication which has come from his pen since the celebrated book of 1790, on the French revolution. We have seen even more regular and finished excellence in this than in that composition. The splendors of that tract were sudden and astonishing ; they flashed like lightning upon the reader, and left him afterwards, for a time, in a state of comparative darkness ; but here all is luminous, and the fire of the irradiating mind shines steadily from the beginning to the end. The energy and beauty of the language, the force and liveliness of the images, the clearness and propriety of the historical allusions and illustrations, all combine to give an effect to these letters, not easily rivalled by the pen of any other writer. Age has certainly not impaired the genius of Mr. Burke ; he asserts himself to be on the verge of the grave : " whatever I write," says he, " is in

its nature testamentary ;” yet he writes with the vigour of a man who had just attained the maturity of his talents.

The amount of his reasoning is this:— The system of France is impious, enormously wicked, and destructive to all within its sphere: we must either conquer it, or be destroyed ourselves. Peace would enable it to operate rapidly to our ruin: let us, therefore, avoid peace. Although the idea of eternal war with the Jacobins must, to us of common apprehension, appear extravagant, and ultimately ruinous, yet it must be admitted that the views and conduct of the French rulers are such as to shew that peace is at present impracticable, and to justify Burke’s reasoning as applicable to present circumstances. Considering peace as the most pernicious policy, he exhorts his countrymen to vigour and perseverance in combating an irremediable evil. His exhortation is very eloquent, and, as far as respects present circumstances, replete with the soundest reasoning and most salutary lessons of conduct. To encourage the ex-

ertion absolutely necessary for the salvation of the country, he shews that our resources are such as, if wisely directed to the great and main object, may save the country. His eloquence, founded in truth, addresses to his fellow subjects the most powerful motives to bring into action their physical and moral resources. ‘ A dreadful evil impends. By energetic efforts we can be saved ; by pusillanimity, relaxation, or indifference, we must be ruined.’

I shall forbear selecting passages from this extraordinary work, because it has been so recently in the hands of all readers.

Several answers were attempted to Burke’s ‘ Thoughts on a Regicide Peace ;’ some of them very abusive. Burke, had, indeed, at almost every period of his life been the object of scurrility and invective : attacks which all eminent men must pay, who speak and act according to their own perceptions of truth and of rectitude. The part that he took on the French revolution, and on the

dissemination of Jacobinical doctrines in these realms, made him detested by all those who wished these doctrines to be reduced to practice. Catiline's *Rights of Man* conspirators reviled Cicero. Burke threw upon their designs light: they loved darkness better. The description of the English Jacobins in the 'Regicide Peace,' so just and so animated, inflamed that body with rage. One of their Apostles, in a rhapsody of abuse, comprising almost every scurrilous term the language could afford, has a conclusion, which the 'Monthly Review' notices as very laughable. 'John Thelwall calls Edmund Burke a scribbler!' The 'Thoughts' underwent in the 'Monthly Review' the ablest and most complete discussion that any work of the author had undergone since Mackintosh's answer to the 'Reflexions.'

Mr. Burke about this time received a visit from a very eminent literary gentleman, who has been so kind as to communicate to me various particulars of the conversation which

took place, and the deportment of his host. Part of the communications is interspersed in different parts of the volumes; the remainder I shall insert here.

The visitant went prepossessed with the very highest idea of merit which he could analyse, comprehend, and appreciate. The first address of the host was extremely striking, and suggested to the guest the idea of chivalrous hospitality. His powers of conversation were wonderful: in extent and minuteness of detail, as well as the most profound and expanded philosophy; in playfulness, in humour, wit, serious imagery, beautiful, grand, and diversified. An instance of his correctness in point of fact, he exhibited in a statement of the poor's rates of fifty parishes in Buckinghamshire, during the time he had been at Beaconsfield; he also gave the history and progress of the farming, the improvements, rents, and taxes. The conversation having turned upon literary subjects, the guest had an opportunity of hearing him talk of David Hume. The

reader will remember, that Mr. Hume, in a note on his account of Mary, mentions three sets of persons that are not to be argued with, but left to their own prejudices : a Scotch Jacobite, who believes in the innocence of Mary ; an Irish Catholic, who denies the truth of the Irish massacre ; and an English Whig, who believes in Titus Oates's plot. Mr. Burke considered himself, though no Catholic, as referred to on the subject of the massacre. Mr. Hume and he had met at Garrick's, and the massacre was one of the subjects discussed. Mr. Burke endeavoured to prove that the received accounts were in a great degree unfounded, or at least very much exaggerated, and quoted affidavits deposited in Trinity College, Dublin. He described various absurd stories that had been propagated and believed by many concerning the Irish ; among others, that the ghosts of the murdered Protestants frequented the banks of the Shannon almost from its source to the sea. Mr. Hume maintained the justness of the account, which makes a part of his history. It must

be owned that the evidence is much stronger in favour of Mr. Hume's position than Mr. Burke's. In the first place, independent of testimony, it is perfectly consonant to the ferocious and bloodthirsty character so often exhibited by the Irish in their most enormous atrocities. Let us consider their conduct : when driven on by furious bigotry, they supported the contemptible, priest-ridden James against the wise and glorious deliverer of Europe. Let us view their conduct in the late rebellion : the cruelties imputed to them in the former part of the 17th century are not greater than those which they are known to have perpetrated towards its close, and in our own days ; they proceeded, at the instance of their priests, like wild beasts, purposely infuriated by their keepers, and let loose. So much for internal evidence in the character of the Irish. But the authorities received by Hume are those of annalists and historians near the time ; Rushforth, Temple, Nalson, and Whitlocke. It is certain, however, that Mr. Burke did not regard Hume's memory with great affection,

however highly he must have admired his talents.* Perhaps the religious sentiments of Hume might have been one cause of Mr. Burke's disapprobation, as no one was more strongly impressed with the necessity of religion to the well-being of society.†

Mr. Burke talked in very high terms of Dr. Adam Smith; praised the clearness and depth of his understanding, his profound and extensive learning, and the vast accession that had accrued to British literature.

* Some paltry antiquarian, I forget the man's name, has lately been nibbling at our illustrious historian, and raking into some old Saxon books with a view to prove that he is erroneous in the names of one or two monks. The Spectator has a very fine paper on a fly which, viewing St. Paul's Cathedral, from its diminutive optics, might, he conceived, discover some roughness in the surface of a particular part, though so totally unable to comprehend the beauty and grandeur of the whole building.

† It does not appear that Mr. Hume, notwithstanding his penetration, at his first acquaintance with Burke, discovered his extraordinary talents, as in a letter to Mr. Adam Smith, he speaks of him as 'a Mr. Burke, an Irish gentleman, who has written a very pretty book on the Sublime and Beautiful.' The reader will remember a case somewhat parallel, not in the writer, but in the subject, when Whitlocke speaks of *one Milton*.

and philosophy from these exertions, and described his heart as being equally good with his head, and his manners as peculiarly pleasing. Mr. Smith, he said, told him, after they had conversed on subjects of political economy, that he was the only man, who, without communication, thought on these topics exactly as he did. It is not surprising that two such men should think in the same way, especially as both had read Aristotle's Politics.

They talked of Godwin's Political Justice. Mr. Burke said, he had looked at that book, but not read it. Hearing his opinion on gratitude, 'I should,' said he, 'spare him the commission of that vice by not conferring on him any benefit. Swaggering paradoxes,' he observed, 'when examined, sneak into pitiful logomachies.' The extravagant and absurd theories of Godwin he imputed to vanity, and a desire of appearing deep, when really shallow.* It is not

* He on another occasion said of Godwin, Holcroft, and other groppers into the new philosophy, 'these fellows have

unlikely, that one ground for censuring Hume was, that he degraded his abilities by affecting paradoxes when so able to bring forward the profoundest wisdom without any affectation at all. In talking of reasoning, he said: ‘ The *majors* make a pompous figure in the battle, but the victory of truth depends upon the little *minor* of circumstances.

In speaking of Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke did justice to his head and heart ; and his guest saw him softened into tenderness when mentioning their past friendship and the many amiable qualities of that extraordinary personage. ‘ I confess,’ said he, ‘ I did love Fox; as who, that knew him intimately, could not? but as a lover I was jealous, especially during the last years of our intercourse, that he was more attached to another than to me.’ Whether that other person was really the subject of conversation or

got a wrong twist in their heads, which, ten to one, gives them a wrong twist in their hearts.’

not I could not learn ; if he was, it is probable that some things might have been advanced which the guest did not think proper to repeat.

Mr. Burke said he was so cruel as to disapprove of mercy in Mr. Fox, when he forgave the meek lamb Horne Tooke. He ought never, he said, to have pardoned his abuse of Lord Holland, even if he looked over his abuse of himself. A son ought never to associate with the man that slandered his father.

He painted the atrocities of Robespierre with wonderful force and brightness. After serious energy, he betook himself to irony, and concluded with saying : ‘ Robespierre, the meek lamb, groaned under the ferocious Louis XVI.’

The discourse turning upon Dr. Johnson, he said he was greater in conversation than even in writing, and that Boswell’s Life was the best record of his powers. This work,

he said, was the first experiment of complete transmission of conversation ; delivering the wisdom without hiding the weakness.

The guest told me, that some of his fellow guests were children, whom the host entertained as much to their mind as he did others to their mind. He rolled with them on the carpet, played at te-totum and push-pin. ‘ He,’ says his guest, ‘ under infirmity, and the expectation of death, though far advanced in years, had all the vigour of manhood and playfulness of childhood.’ This is the substance of the memorandums which I made of what passed at Beaconsfield during the visit in question, except the intercourse between Paine and Mr. Burke, before the French revolution, and in its first stages, which the reader will have seen in its proper place. The opinion which I entertain of the guest leads me to believe that many valuable remarks must have been made on his side, which his modesty has forborne to mention, and that just praise must

have been bestowed by such a host to such a guest, which, from the same motive, was not communicated. Soon after that time Burke went to Bath, as his health was in a bad state; but in the course of the Spring he recovered.

Mr. M'Cormick, in mentioning an advertisement published by Mr. Owen, relatively to him and Mr. Burke,* conceives that the severity of the advertisement hastened the death of Burke. If it would have been any glory to have accelerated to the world the loss of Edmund Burke, the framer of the advertisement must rest his fame on some other grounds. The advertisement was in November 1796, and Mr. Burke was in good

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* The reader, no doubt, remembers a surreptitious copy of the 'Regicide Peace' being offered to the public by Mr. Owen, but stopped by an injunction of Chancery, preventing this invasion of literary property. Mr. Owen's own account was, that he had been desired to account for the profits of the Letter concerning the Duke of Bedford, though not compelled to refund; that therefore he published what did not belong to him. His own reasoning is sufficient to enable us to form a just judgment.

health four months after. The petty attempts of malignity, during his life, to disturb his peace were as unavailing as the petty attempts of malignity after his death are to blacken his character. On his return to Beaconsfield, he proceeded in the plan of which the 'Regicide Peace' was a part; and, although Heaven was not pleased to permit him to finish his task, there is in this, the last of his works,* the same accuracy, minuteness, and extent of knowledge; the same sportiveness of humour; the same brilliancy of fancy, vigour, and variety of argument; the same grand comprehensiveness of view, that had for forty years distinguished the productions of Edmund Burke. Having, in the former letters on the same subject, established the necessity (at least in the existing circumstances) of perseverance in the war with France, and stated the sufficiency of our resources, he in this part gives a complete enumeration of our means of carrying on the contest, in

* And hitherto the last of his posthumous publications.

the richness of the country and the spirit of its inhabitants. He anxiously wishes that other nations might so awaken to a sense of their real interests, as to combine in the most vigorous opposition to a system carried on on the avowed maxims of robbery ; but his chief object was to rouse his own country. His last advice is, ‘ succumb not under difficulties : unite vigilance and courage ; guard against your ambitious and insolent foe, who will, if he can, enslave you, his most detested, as most dreaded enemies, as he has done others ; but he cannot enslave you, if you are stedfastly determined to defend yourselves.’ His health, from the beginning of June, rapidly declined ; but his body only, not his mind, was affected. His understanding operated with undiminished force and uncontracted range : his dispositions retained their sweetness and amiableness. He continued regularly and strenuously to perform the duties of religion and benevolence : his concern for the happiness of his friends and the welfare of mankind was equally vivid. His goodness even ex-

tended to uneasiness on account of the fatigue and trouble of attending his sick-bed, occasioned to the inmates of his house. When his favourite domestics, confidential friends, and nearest connections, were eager to bestow the nightly attendance of nurses, he solicitously importuned them not to deprive themselves of rest. Although his body was in a state of constant and perceptible decay, yet was it without pain. The lamp of life was consuming fast, but was not violently extinguished. The week in which he died he conversed with literary and political friends, on various subjects of knowledge, and especially on the awful posture of affairs. He repeatedly requested their forgiveness, if ever he had offended them, and conjured them to make the same request in his name to those of his friends that were absent. Friday, July the 7th, he spent the morning in a recapitulation of the most important acts of his life, the circumstances in which he acted, and the motives by which he was prompted; shewed that his comprehensive mind retained the whole

series of public affairs, and discussed his own conduct in the arduous situations he had had to encounter. Dwelling particularly on the French revolution, and on the separation from admired friends, which it had occasioned, he spoke with pleasure of the conscious rectitude of his intentions; and intreated that, if any unguarded asperity of his had offended them, to believe that no offence was meant. He expressed his forgiveness of all who had, either on that subject or for any other cause, endeavoured to injure him. The evening he spent in less agitating conversation, and in listening to the Essays of Addison, his favourite author. The next morning, after some time spent in devotion, and after bearing a most pathetic and impressive testimony to the excellent conduct of his wife in situations of difficulty and distress, as well as through the whole course of their relation, he fell into a slumber; and when he awoke, being very placid and composed, again desired to hear some of the elegant essays of the Christian moralist. The last subjects of his literary at-

tention were the INCULCATIONS OF PRACTICAL WISDOM, GUIDING TO TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL HAPPINESS. He frequently had, during his last illness, declared, what his intimates knew well before, his thorough belief of the Christian religion, his veneration for true Christians of all persuasions ; but his own preference of the articles of the church of England. In that mode of faith he was educated, and that he preserved through life. His end was suited to the simple greatness of mind which he displayed through life, every way unaffected, without levity, without ostentation, full of natural grace and dignity. He appeared neither to wish nor to dread, but patiently and placidly to await, the appointed hour of his dissolution. He had conversed for some time, with his usual force of thought and expression, on the gloomy state of his country, for the welfare of which his heart was interested to the last beat. His young friend, Mr. Nagle, coming to his bed side, after much interesting and tender conversation, he expressed a desire to be carried to

another apartment. Mr. Nagle, with the assistance of servants, was complying with his request, when Mr. Burke, faintly uttering, ‘ God bless you!’ fell back, and breathed his last, Saturday, July 8th, 1797, in the sixty-eighth year of his age.

On Saturday the 15th he was interred. His funeral was attended by the Duke of Portland, Lord Fitzwilliam, Mr. Windham, Dr. Lawrence, and many others of the nobility and gentry. The pall-bearers were :—

The LORD CHANCELLOR,	Duke of DEVONSHIRE,
Duke of PORTLAND,	Earl FITZWILLIAM,
SPEAKER of the HOUSE of	Earl of INCHQUIN,
COMMONS,	The Rt. Hon. Mr. WINDHAM.
Sir GILBERT ELLIOT,	

Not the least affecting part of this solemn scene were the members of those benevolent institutions which the deceased had patronized, in deep, though plain mourning, performing the last duties to their revered benefactor. He was buried in Beaconsfield church, and, by his own desire, close to his son.

A sermon was preached in the church the following Sunday, which characterized the deceased sage and philanthropist with such pathos as deeply to affect all the hearers.

On hearing of the death of a man whom kindred mind taught him to prize higher than most men could rate, Mr. Fox proposed that his remains should be deposited in the national Mausoleum of Genius; but was soon informed that a clause in the departed sage's will had requested the forbearance of posthumous honours.

THE LAST WILL OF EDMUND BURKE.

‘ If my dear son and friend had survived me, any will would have been unnecessary; but since it has pleased God to call him to himself before his father, my duty calls upon me to make such a disposition of my worldly effects as seems to my best judgment most equitable and reasonable; therefore I, Edmund Burke, late of the parish of St. James, Westminster, though suffering under sore

and inexpressible affliction, being of sound and disposing mind, do make my last will and testament in manner following :—

‘ First, according to the ancient, good, and laudable custom, of which my heart and understanding recognize the propriety, I bequeath my soul to God, hoping for his mercy through the only merits of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. My body I desire, if I should die in any place very convenient for its transport thither (but not otherwise) to be buried in the church, at Beaconsfield, near to the bodies of my dearest brother and my dearest son, in all humility praying that, as we have lived in perfect unity together, we may together have a part in the resurrection of the just.

‘ I wish my funeral to be (without any punctiliousness in that respect) the same as that of my brother, and to exceed it as little as possible in point of charge, whether on account of my family or of any others who would go to a greater expence ; and I

desire, in the same manner and with the same qualifications, that no monument beyond a middle-sized tablet, with a small and simple inscription on the church-wall, or on the flag-stone, be erected. I say this, because I know the partial kindness to me of some of my friends. But I have had, in my life-time, but too much of noise and compliment.

‘ As to the rest, it is uncertain what I shall have after the discharge of my debts, which, when I write this, are very great. Be that as it may, my will concerning my worldly substance is short. As my entirely beloved, faithful, and affectionate wife did, during the whole time in which I lived most happily with her, take on her the charge and management of my affairs, assisted by her son, whilst God was pleased to lend him to us, and did conduct them often in a state of much derangement and embarrassment, with a patience and prudence which probably have no example, and thereby left my mind free to prosecute my public duty or

my studies, or to indulge in my relaxations, or to cultivate my friends, at my pleasure ; so, on my death, I wish things to continue as substantially as they have always done. I therefore, by this my last and only will, devise, leave, and bequeath to my entirely beloved and incomparable wife, Jane Mary Burke, the whole real estate of which I shall die seised, whether land, rents, or houses, in absolute fee-simple ; as also all my personal estate, whether stock, furniture, plate, money, or securities for money, annuities for lives or for years, be the said estate of what nature, quality, extent or description it may, to her sole uncontrouled possession and disposal, as her property, in any manner which may seem proper to her, to possess and dispose of the same, whether it be real estate or personal estate, by her last will or otherwise. It being my intention that she may have as clear and uncontrouled a right and title thereto and therein as I posses myself, as to the use, expenditure, sale, or devise. I hope these words are sufficient to express the absolute, unconditioned, and

unlimited right of complete ownership I mean to give to her to the said lands and goods; and I trust that no words or surplusage or ambiguity may vitiate this my clear intention. There are no persons who have a right, or, I believe, a disposition to complain of this bequest, which I have duly weighed, and made on a proper consideration of my duties, and the relations in which I stand.

‘ I also make my wife, Jane Mary Burke aforesaid, my sole executrix of this my last will; knowing that she will receive advice and assistance from my excellent friends, Dr. Walker King and Dr. Lawrence, to whom I recommend her and her concerns, though that, perhaps, is needless, as they are as much attached to her as they are to me. I do it only to mark my special confidence in their affection, skill, and industry.

‘ I wish that my dear wife may, as soon after my decease as possible (which, after what has happened, she will see with con-

stancy and resignation) make her will, with the advice and assistance of the two persons I have named. But it is my wish also, that she will not think herself so bound up by any bequests she may make in the said will, and which, while she lives, can be only intentions, as not during her life to use her property, with all the liberty I have given her over it, just as if she had written no will at all; but in every thing to follow the directions of her own equitable and charitable mind, and her own prudent and measured understanding.

‘ Having thus committed every thing to her discretion, I recommend (subject always to that discretion) that if I should not, during my life, give or secure to my dear niece, Mary C. Haviland, wife of my worthy friend Captain Haviland, the sum of 1000l. or an annuity equivalent to it, that she would bestow upon her that sum of money, or that annuity, conditioned and limited in such manner as she, my wife aforesaid, may think proper, by a devise in her will or other-

wise, as she may find most convenient to the situation of her affairs, without pressure upon her, during her life. My wife put me in mind of this, which I now recommend to her. I certainly some years ago gave my niece reason to expect it ; but I was not able to execute my intentions. If I do this in my life-time, this recommendation goes for nothing.

‘ As to my other friends and relations, and companions through life, and especially the friends and companions of my son, who were the dearest of mine, I am not unmindful of what I owe them. If I do not name them all here, and mark them with tokens of my remembrance, I hope they will not attribute it to unkindness, or to a want of a due sense of their merits towards me. My old friend and faithful companion, Will. Burke, knows his place in my heart. I do not mention him as executor or assistant. I know that he will attend to my wife ; but I chuse the two I have mentioned, as, from their time of life, of greater activity. I recommend him to them.

‘In the political world I have made many connections, and some of them amongst persons of high rank. Their friendship, from political, became personal to me: and they have shewn it in a manner more than to satisfy the utmost demands that could be made from my love and sincere attachment to them. They are the worthiest people in the kingdom: their intentions are excellent, and I wish them every kind of success. I bequeath my brother-in-law, John Nugent, and the friends in my poor son’s list, which is in his mother’s hands, to their protection: as to them and the rest of my companions, who constantly honoured and chused our house as our inmates, I have put down their names in a list, that my wife should send them the usual remembrance of little mourning rings, as a token of my remembrance. In speaking of my friends, to whom I owe so many obligations, I ought to name especially Lord Fitzwilliam, the Duke of Portland, and the Lord Cavendishes, with the Duke of Devonshire, the worthy head of that family.

‘ If the intimacy which I have had with others has been broken off by political difference on great questions concerning the state of things existing and impending, I hope they will forgive whatever of general human infirmity, or of my own particular infirmity, has entered into that contention. I heartily entreat their forgiveness. I have nothing farther to say.

‘ Signed and sealed as my last will and testament, this 11th day of August, 1794, being written all with my own hand.

EDMUND BURKE. (L. S.)

‘ In the presence of
DUPONT,
WM. WEBSTER,
WALKER KING.’

‘ On reading the above will, I have nothing to add or essentially alter ; but one point may want to be perfected and explained. In leaving my lands and hereditaments to my wife, I find that I have omitted the words which in deeds create an inheritance

in law. Now, though I think them hardly necessary in a will, yet to obviate all doubts, I explain the matter in a Codicil which is annexed to this.

(Signed)

EDMUND BURKE.

THE CODICIL.

‘ I Edmund Burke, of the parish of Beaconsfield, in the county of Bucks, being of sound and disposing judgment and memory, make this my last will and testament, in no sort revoking, but explaining and confirming, a will made by me, and dated the 11th of August, 1794, in which will I have left, devised, and bequeathed, all my worldly effects, of whatever nature and quality the same may be, whatever lands, tenements, houses, freehold and leasehold interests, pensions for lives or years, arrears of the same, legacies, or other debts due to me, plate, household stuff, books, stock in cattle and horses, and utensils of farming, and all other my goods and chattels, to my dear wife, Jane Mary Burke, in as full and perfect manner as the same might be devised,

conveyed, or transferred to her by any act or instrument whatsoever, with such recommendations as in my will aforesaid are made, and with a wish that in the discharge of my debts the course hitherto pursued may be as nearly as possible observed. Sensible, however, that in payment of debt no exact rule can be preserved, the same is therefore left to her discretion, with the advice of our friends, whom she will naturally consult. The reason of my making this will, or codicil to my former will, is from my having omitted, in devising by that will my lands and hereditaments to my wife aforesaid, the full and absolute property thereof, and therein I have omitted the legal words of inheritance. Now, though I think those words, however necessary in a deed, are not so in a will ; yet, to prevent all questions, I do hereby devise all my lands, tenements, and hereditaments, as well as all other property that may be subject to a strict rule of law in deeds, and which would pass if undevised to my heirs, I say I do devise the same lands, tenements, and hereditaments,

to my wife, Jane Mary Burke, and her heirs for ever, in pure, absolute, and unconditional fee simple.

‘ I have now only to recommend to the kindness of my Lord Chancellor (Lord Loughborough), to his Grace the Duke of Portland, to the Most Honourable the Marquis of Buckingham, to the Right Honourable William Windham, and to Dr. Lawrence, of the Commons, and Member of Parliament, that they will, after my death, continue their protection and favour to the emigrant school at Penn, and will entreat, with a weight on which I dare not presume, the Right Honourable William Pitt to continue the necessary allowance which he has so generously and charitably provided for those unhappy children of meritorious parents; and that they will superintend the same, which I wish to be under the immediate care and protection of Dr. Walker King and Dr. Lawrence; and that they will be pleased to exert their influence to place the said young persons in some military

corps, or some other service, as may best suit their dispositions and capacities, praying God to bless their endeavours.

‘ Signed and sealed as a codicil to my will, or an explanation and confirmation thereof, agreeably to the note placed at the end of it, this 30th day of January, 1795.

EDMUND BURKE.

‘ In the presence of
WALKER KING,
RICHARD BURKE,
EDWARD NAGLE.’

Mr. Burke was about five feet ten inches high, well made and muscular ; of that firm and compact frame that denotes more strength than bulk. His countenance, I am told, had been in his youth handsome. The expression of his face was less striking than one, who had not seen him, would have anticipated. During the vigour of his age he had excelled at the manly exercises most common in Ireland, especially leaping, pitching the bar, and throwing the stone.

No charge has been more frequently made against Burke than one that would affect either his intellectual or moral character, or both. This was the charge of INCONSISTENCY. The unjustness of this charge has, I trust, appeared through this narration. The more fully we consider his principles, reasonings, and conduct, the more minutely we examine the parts, the more comprehensively we contemplate the whole, the more completely shall we see that Burke has been, in his intellectual processes, in his moral and political conduct, uniformly CONSISTENT. ‘LET EXPERIENCE BE YOUR GUIDE, AVOID UNTRIED SPECULATIONS.’ That maxim governed his reasonings respecting America. ‘Experience,’ he said, ‘has shewn you that your former mode of treating your colonies has been beneficial ; do not change that mode for an untried theory of taxation.’ Experience taught him that religion was friendly to virtue and order. The lesson taught by his exposure of the Bolingbroke philosophy was, ‘Do not for speculations of infidelity aban-

don those principles of religion which experience has taught you to be necessary to good government, virtue, and happiness.' In his 'Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol' he speaks the same language. 'Some men propose untried speculations on the rights of man as the foundation of government. I reprobate these notions, because not sanctioned by experience.' On the French revolution, his doctrine is, 'religion, justice, and regard to property, have been proved by experience to be necessary to the well being of society. I reprobate a system that disregards these principles; because, following my constant guide, experience, I perceive that the new theory and practice must be pernicious.' He preserved consistency, by varying his means to secure the unity of his end: when the equipoise of the vessel in which he sailed was endangered by overloading it upon one side, he carried the weight of his reasons to that which might preserve the equipoise. These were the rules of his judgment and conduct. Adopting and applying these rules *from the*

beginning to the end of his intellectual, moral, and political efforts, EDMUND BURKE WAS CONSISTENT.

Having already endeavoured, in the course of this narrative, to exhibit the prominent features of Burke's intellectual and moral character, I shall conclude with a brief summary, which will merely collect my scattered observations.

Edmund Burke was endowed by nature, in a most extraordinary degree, with that combination of powers which constitutes genius; an understanding rapidly penetrating, energetic, comprehensive, and profound; a memory, quick, retentive, and capacious; a fancy vivid, versatile, rapid, and forcible. Art and discipline improved these powers, and furnished them with ample materials. Those who have partially considered the operations of Burke's genius have supposed his fancy to have predominated; but a more thorough acquaintance

with his mental operations would convince them that, though his fancy ranges through every region of knowledge, and soars to every height of science, for amusement, embellishment, allusion, or analogy; yet reason is the faculty that presides in his intellectual processes. Whatever sportive, beautiful, or grand imagery may decorate his works, the body is history and deduction, antecedent and consequent. Disciplined by the soundest philosophy, his ratiocinative operations proceed from principles the most efficacious in the investigation of truth and conveyance of instruction. The great guide of his reasoning is EXPERIENCE; an experience not only of model, but of law; comprehending not merely individual governments and societies, but the constitution of man. This was the light by which he saw the effects of Bolingbroke's speculations. This shewed him the consequences of the new philosophy of France, sixteen years before it was reduced to practice. This pointed out the danger

of the new theories respecting America, of Price's and Priestley's new doctrines on government. This gave him from the commencement a complete view of the consequences of the French revolution. His powerful understanding, besides being guided by the best director as to the objects of pursuit and rejection, was in all its efforts comprehensive. It carried its views to all the parts and to the whole; to causes and effects; to adjuncts; to every relation or circumstance which might affect the subject in question. This COMPREHENSIVENESS OF CONSIDERATION is manifest in his survey of the internal state and history of this country;—in his 'Thoughts on the present Discontents;' in his examinations of our systems respecting America; his plan of œconomy; his views of the affairs of India; and, above all, in his conclusions concerning the revolution of France.

The *materials* with which a mind so endowed, so guided, and so operating, was

furnished, were as extensive as the history and principles of physical and moral science, as the history and practice of art. Great as were his powers of acquirement, successfully as they had been exerted, his *means of communication* were no less efficacious. No orator ever surpassed him in the whole constituents of eloquence, and in the *most important* few equalled him,—in the information, principles, moral and political lessons, which his speeches and writings convey. If we judge from detached parts of his works, there may be inequalities found. In the structure of St. Paul's there may be stones less smooth than some in a small cottage. We judge not from the minute parts, but from *the whole* of the massy, strong, magnificent, and sublime work.

If a common understanding may venture to notice in such a mind as his what it thinks the most prominent features, I should say that an understanding of the most extraordinary force, *directing its exertions to the*

whole compass of phenomena, and guided, in the conclusions it draws from that wide range of premises, by the direction of experience, has been among the excellencies which have most peculiarly distinguished Edmund Burke: that poetically rich, splendid, beautiful, and grand, as his imagery is, he is CHIEFLY EMINENT FOR THE DISCOVERY OF MOMENTOUS TRUTH, AND THE COMMUNICATION OF MOMENTOUS INSTRUCTION. A genius that has shewn a fitness for any species of exertion, has rarely been more frequently and completely exerted to render men wiser, better, and happier. The more closely the intellectual history and principles of this wonderful personage are examined, the more thoroughly, I may venture to assert, shall we be convinced that, with every power, and numberless exertions, in sublime poetry, his principal and most*

* By poetry the reader will perceive that I mean creative fancy: the sense in which Lord Bacon uses it, when deriving the three great species of composition, history, poetry, and philosophy, from their sources in the understanding, memory, fancy, and reason.

successful efforts have been in sublime practical philosophy.

/ The qualities of his heart were no less amiable and estimable than his talents were astonishing:—benevolent, just, temperate, magnanimous. He loved his country, loved its constitution, because he believed it the best adapted for its happiness: at different times, from the same principle, he supported different members of it; when he thought the one or other likely to be overbalanced. During the prevalence of the Bute plans, dreading the influence of the Crown, he supported the People; and, for the same cause, during the American war. After the overthrow of the French monarchy and aristocracy, and the dissemination in Britain of the principles that had destroyed these orders, apprehending similar effects, if not vigorously opposed in England, he strenuously supported the monarchy and aristocracy. Thus discriminately patriotic in public life, in his private relations his con-

duct was highly meritorious. A fond and attentive husband, an affectionate and judiciously indulgent father, a sincere friend, at once fervid and active, a liberal and kind master, an agreeable neighbour, a zealous and bountiful patron, he diffused delight and happiness. His principles were as strict and his habits as virtuous as his dispositions were kind.

His manners were pleasing, insinuating, and engaging, in all companies, but especially in the exercise of hospitality in his own house. His ardent sensibility rendered his temper irritable; his rage, though violent, was not lasting. The contention of active politics called that infirmity forward much more frequently than a calmer situation might have done.

Such only were the trivial foibles that his enemies could with truth alledge, to counterbalance his qualities and talents. With so little alloy, and so much sterling value, in realms in which great talents are frequent,

and great virtues not rare, in the usual course of intellectual and moral excellence, centuries may pass before Providence again bestow an

EDMUND BURKE.

FINIS.

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